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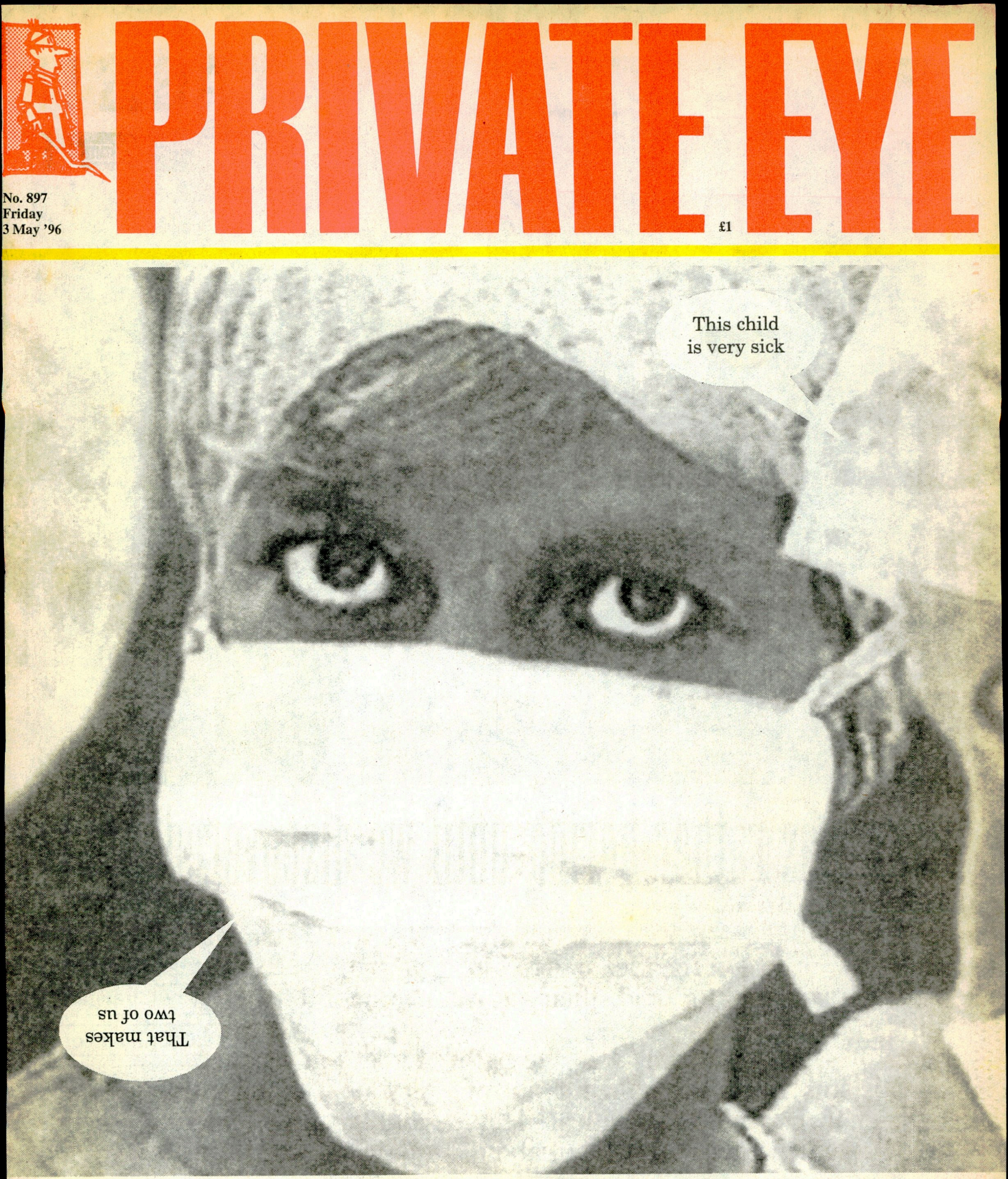

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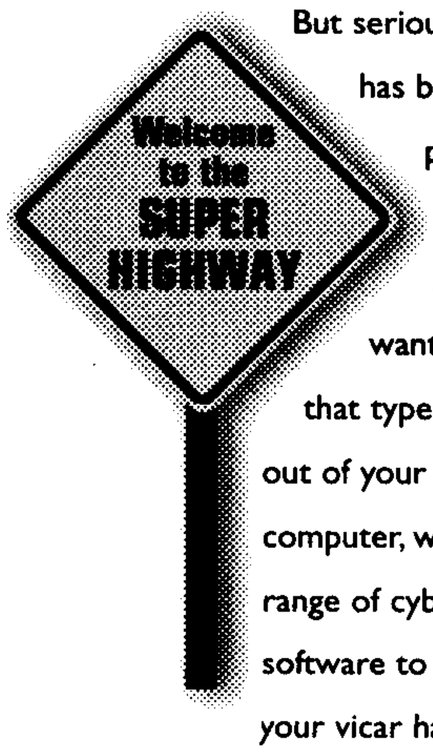
Life was rather boring until we discovered alt.sex



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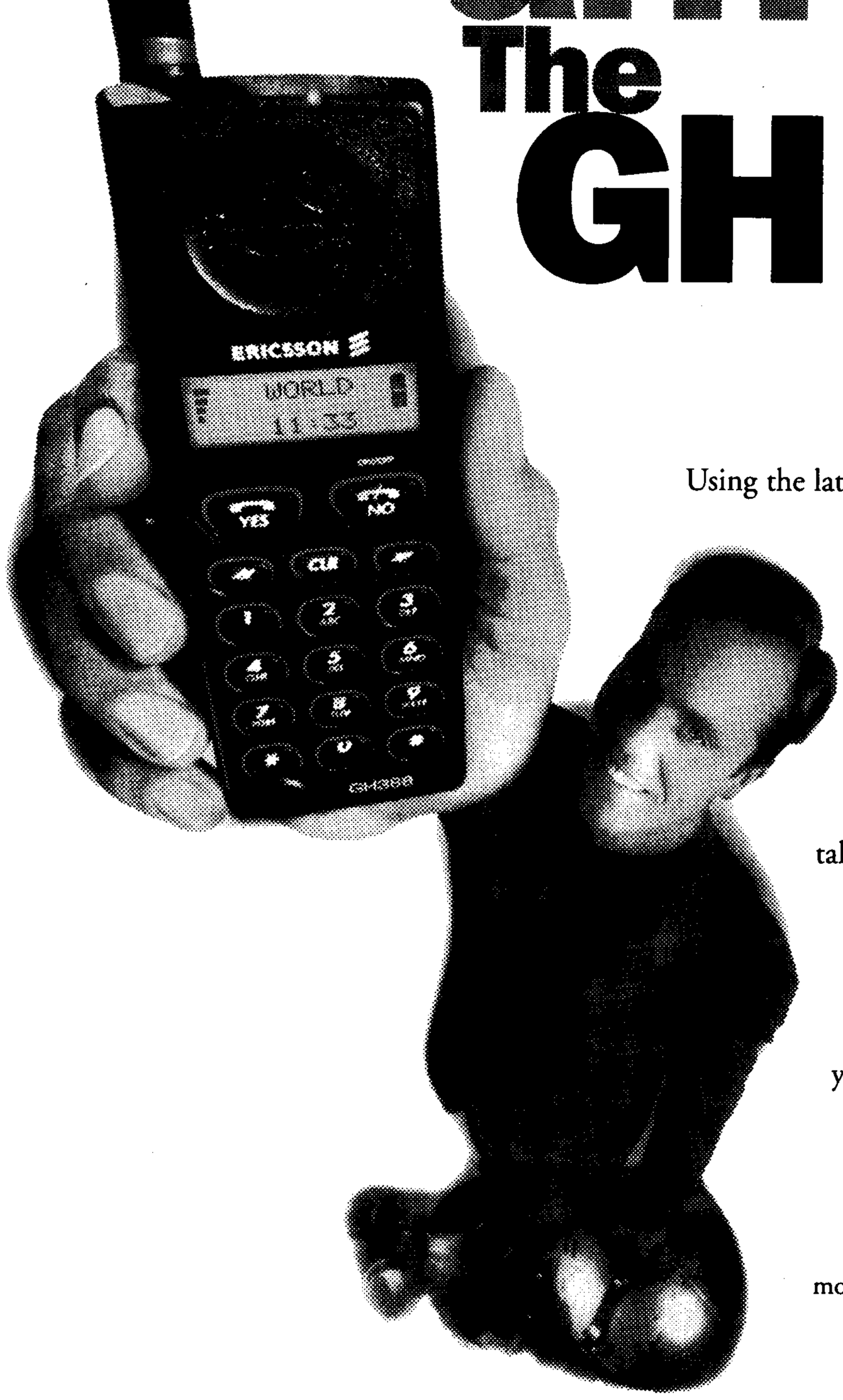

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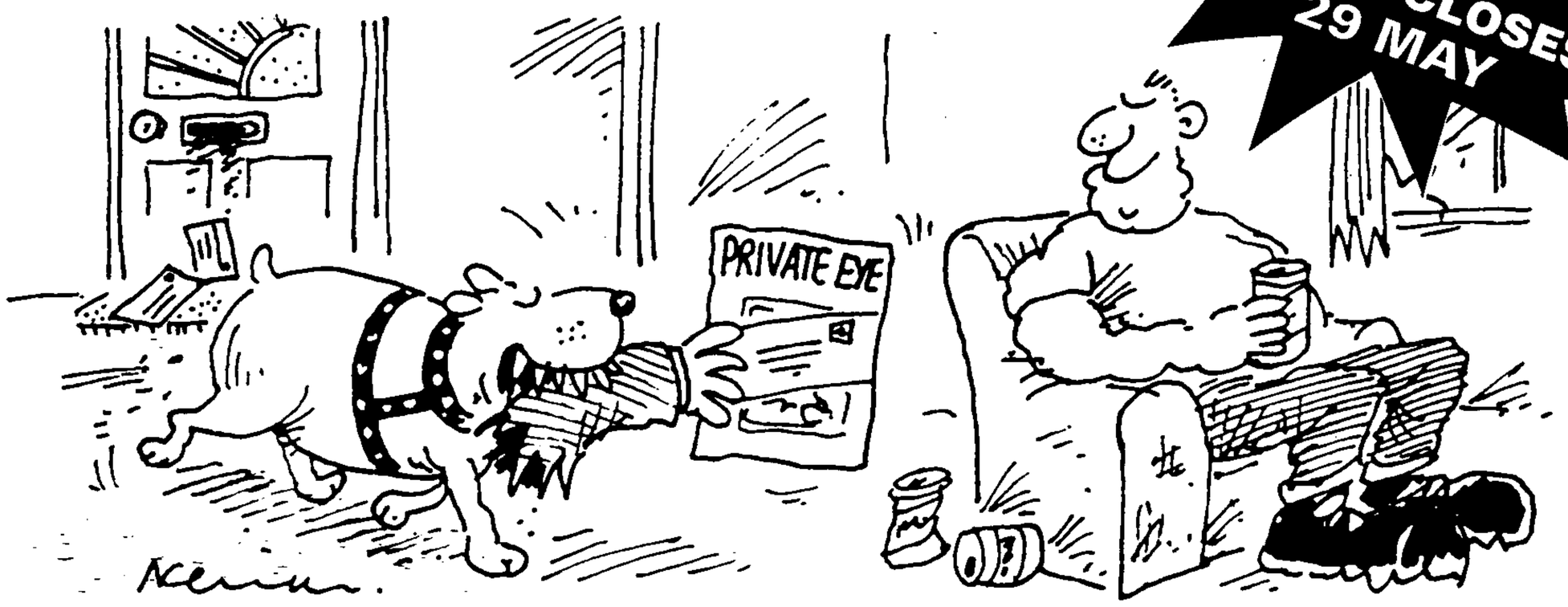

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Gnome

YET again I am under attack from my enemies. The latest attempt to smear my good name is an allegation concerning sexual harassment from a former employee.

Ms Tracy Bimbo has made a disgraceful claim about my behaviour at a party held in New York.

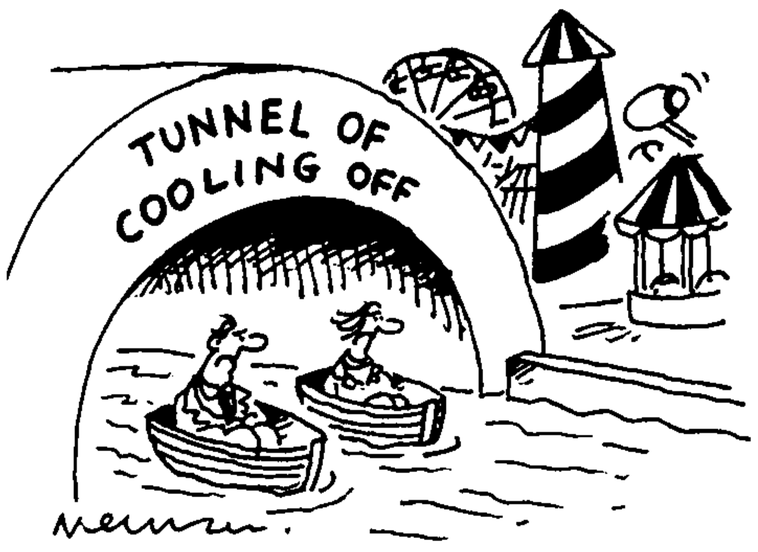
Her account of events at this occasion is a deliberate attempt to lower my standing as a successful British businessman and to suggest that I am unworthy to continue as head of a multi-million pound conglomerate.

For the record I *did* of course harass Ms Bimbo and I *did* make a series of crude and overt sexual suggestions to her in front of my family and the assembled world press.

Any suggestions that I never touched Ms Bimbo, never spoke to her the whole evening and have no idea who she is are completely unfounded.

This attempt to denigrate me by comparison with all the other tycoons in the headlines is a wilful and malicious slur which I will not tolerate.

E. Strobes
pp Lord Gnome
London W1



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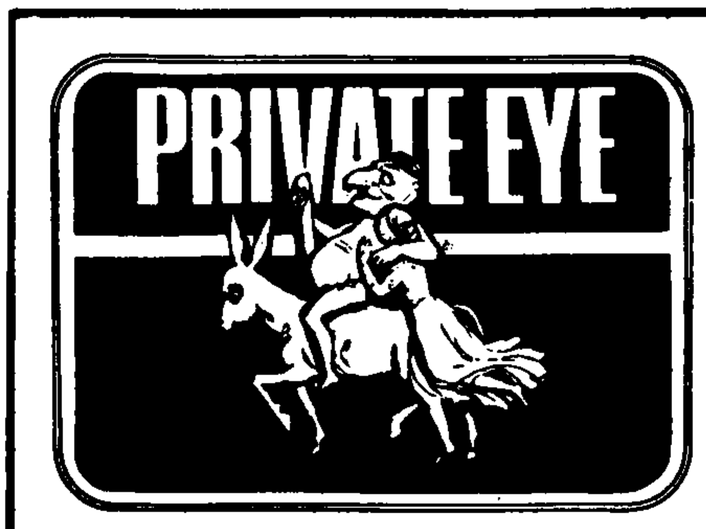


COLOUR SECTION

AS shareholders gather for another British Gas agm, they will be interested to know how their directors responded to last year's fiasco and the much-publicised appearance of Cedric The Pig.

The pig attended in protest at the grotesquely high pay and perks doled out to BG's chief executive, Cedric Brown. Chairman Richard Giordano justified the payments on the grounds that Brown was "the right man to lead this large, complex and currently very challenging company"; and that the company had to tailor its "remuneration policies" to "recruit and retain high quality management".

So "right" was Mr Brown to lead British Gas he is now leaving to take over as president of the Institute of Gas Engineers. The institute is apparently so poor it cannot provide him with the office, secretary or chauffeur-driven limo to which he is accustomed — so all of these, plus a £120,000 "consultancy fee", will be paid for by the shareholders of British Gas. Mr Brown's job at British Gas will be taken over by a new broom: er, Chairman Giordano, whose bloated and extended salary will be paid in dollars.

So how did last year's fat cat salaries succeed in "retaining" BG's "high quality management" of the time? Well, director Russell Herbert has gone with a "termination payment" of £241,775. Director Howard Dalton has gone, too, with £303,420, plus "relocation costs" to his new job in the United States, plus £38,291 paid by BG shareholders into his pension scheme.

These enormous liabilities were forced on British Gas because of the directors' two-year rolling contracts. How has BG responded to widespread criticism of these contracts? It has appointed three new directors — Mr S.J. Brandon, R.H. Moulson and J.B. Whybrew — on two-year rolling service contracts. Mr Brandon has pocketed another £100,000 of shareholders money as a "golden hello".

To top all this British Gas has also generously agreed to "exercise discretion" in allowing directors who leave the board to hang on to their share options. Thus Cedric the Pig can still "exercise" (cash in) his 703,322 share options any time the share price rises, as can retiring directors Norman Blacker and Howard Dalton.

PIRC, the consultancy which calls for higher corporate standards, advised its growing army of clients among pension funds to vote against the whole company report and accounts. In a stinging report PIRC exposes British Gas's consistent record of greed and incompetence since privatisation.

It notes that the ludicrous payments to directors old and new coincide with strict pay controls for ordinary employees and mass sackings of nearly a third of the entire workforce. The company has lost its share of the industrial and commercial market. It produces less and sells less to domestic consumers, more of whom it cuts off.

This year's dividend, uncovered by earnings, costs £637 million, £507 million of which has to come out of the company's dwindling reserves.

PS: This year's quieter agm may have had something to do with an expensive half-day seminar at London's Washington Hotel in February called "Managing AGMs". The seminar included the re-creation of a "hostile annual meeting with awkward questions and 'the chairman's pedal' to silence shareholders monopolising the floor."

The star speaker introduced the final session, *Coping with a Corporate Nightmare*, and spoke about "making the best of a difficult situation" and "handling outraged and sensitive shareholders". He was none other than John Jackson, company secretary of... British Gas.

EUROPEAN Community and World Health Organisation guidelines state that an acceptable level of lead in water is 10mgs per litre. Yet South West Water, North West Water and Northumbria Water all record levels of 80 to 100mgs.

According to the British Medical Association and the WHO, infants and pregnant women are most at risk from the effects of lead poisoning. An enormous 8.7 million of British homes have lead in their water supply; four million of those being above the 10mg guideline.

Now the water companies are in a panic over a directive to bring the water up to standard by 2005. They have two choices: they can take out the lead piping which is causing the problem, which would cost £8 billion; or there is "dosing" — adding chemicals to suppress the toxicity of the lead. This is rather cheaper at £30 million.

The water companies must have sighed with relief when they heard an "expert" give his opinion on the best way forward at an all-party parliamentary meeting on lead in the water supply. He was Christopher Binnie, chairman of the Institute of Water and Environmental Management, and he recommended that dosing would be the best option. What he did not mention was his ownership of Binnie and Partners, environmental and engineering consultants — to the water industry.

PS: Binnie is also a director of the Tories' favourite building firm, W.S. Atkins, which won the Channel tunnel construction contract on which costs spiralled and the project was finished long after deadline.

- *Archer's New Novel.* *25*
- *Hallo! to Di, Carol, Carla! And Dr Mawhinney!* *7*
- *Karaoke Time!* *10*
- *Slicker on Nadir* *28*
- *Even More Archer* *11*
- *Even More Aitken* *27*

KOHL SUMMIT SHOCK

Street Of Shame

MORE than 1,250 readers of the failing *Sunday Express* cancelled their orders after the seeing the word "SHITS" across the front page in 144-point type.

The single part-time hack manning the newsdesk on the Sunday it appeared took 135 calls from readers of the "family" newspaper and was unable to answer hundreds of other calls. The protests continued on Monday, and by Tuesday morning editor Sue Douglas was buried under a mountain of furious letters.

As the storm raged around her Douglas told the *Times* that: "I spoke to Lord Stevens before I did it. He said he would support me" — thus breaking the cardinal rule for editors of not ducking the blame for editorial decisions by passing the buck to proprietors. Another man she consulted beforehand was her old mentor Stewart Steven, under whom she worked at the *Mail on Sunday*. His advice was unequivocal: it would be suicidal madness to use the headline.

And yet she went ahead. Insiders at the paper say her deputy Ian Birrell should have stopped her. But why should he? He is even more ambitious than Douglas — and the headline is yet another nail in her coffin. Still, at least one hack has reassured Douglas that he had no objection to the word being used. What she did not hear was his mumbled explanation: "There's so much shit inside the paper, we might as well have it on the front page too."

CONGRATULATIONS to Andrew Marr, the immensely distinguished 36-year-old who has been chosen to edit the *Indie*. He has come a long way since his days at Cambridge, where he spent much of his time flogging copies of *Socialist Organiser* on street corners — earning himself the nickname "Red Andy".

Indie staff who backed Marr's candidacy are rather less pleased to learn that he has appointed Colin Hughes as his deputy. Hughes's main contribution to the paper in recent years has been to carry out frequent purges and mass-sackings — which is why he was David "Rommel" Montgomery's first choice as editor. Luckily, Rommel was overruled by the other main shareholder, Tony O'Reilly. But with Hughes as second-in-command, no one can feel safe.

Meanwhile Labour's Northern Ireland spokeswoman Mo Mowlam is in hot water for accepting a £20,000 subsidy from Montgomery — an odd arrangement, in view of his extreme unionist views. One fact not yet mentioned is that Montgomery's blue-eyed boy, Colin Hughes, is the former live-in lover of... Mo Mowlam.

SIR Herbert Gussett and millions of other patriotic citizens have recently received a mailshot from the *Telegraph* inviting them to "help us by taking part in our survey". The reason for this exercise is that "at the *Daily Telegraph* we are always interested in people's views about the newspapers they read and the things they like to do".

How sweet of the *Telegraph* to be so solicitous about its readers' wellbeing. "What make of car do you and your spouse drive?" "In which month is your home insurance due for renewal?" "Would a loan that paid off all your credit card, store card and other commitments be of interest to you?" "Mitsubishi Motors make fine cars. Would you like more information about their range?"

It would of course be quite wrong to suggest that this disinterested plea for "help" is in fact a crude commercial scheme which will allow the *Telegraph* to flog mailing lists to insurance companies, car companies etc, leaving hapless readers drowning in a sea of junk mail.

Sadly, the exhaustive questionnaire offers few opportunities for respondents to give their "views" about the newspaper. It does not ask any of the really important questions, such as "What do you think of the ghastly new Peterbore column?" or "Is Boris Johnson off his rocker?" Perhaps it knows the answers already.

THE *Times Magazine*'s diary, by Joanna Pitman, had an interesting description of a perilous journey the hackette made during a recent assignment in Islamabad.

The car taking la Pitman was "undoubtedly the most decrepit, the most exhausted vehicle" she had ever ridden in. "Gaping sockets showed where some of the instruments had been wrenched out of the dashboard. The floorboards above the engine had been removed releasing a furnace heat."

However unpleasant this was, Pitman had obviously taken some interesting reading for her journey. Perhaps it was Norman Lewis's book, *Golden Earth*, in which he recalls travelling in Burma in "the most decrepit, the most exhausted vehicle" he had ever seen. You guessed it: "Gaping sockets showed where all the instruments had been wrenched out of the dashboard. The floorboards above the engine had been removed releasing a furnace heat." What a coincidence!

READERS of the *Daily Telegraph*'s Money-Go-Round supplement have every right to wonder why £60,000-a-year Money editor Ian Cowie is regaling them with tales of a visit to a Malaysian casino and a helicopter flight over Kuala Lumpur (20 April).

And just why is his £85,000-a-year competitor on *Money Mail*, Margaret Stone, writing her pisspoor column from New York (24 April) instead of attending to falling building society interest rates?

Both are desperately trying to justify their salaries while swanning around the world on all-expenses paid trips from the very companies whose affairs they should be investigating.

Cowie has spent 10 days in the Far East, courtesy of Kleinwort Benson. Stone will probably not be talking to her reporters about her freebie with Schroders to the Bahamas.

O·B·N

HOW would Lord Rothermere, Chairman of the Daily Mail and General Trust, cope as a castaway? Today he is the guest on Radio 4's *Desert Island Discs* — and he reveals to Sue Lawley that he wouod hate the isolation. But he would ease the boredom with his chosen book, Dante's Inferno, and his luxury item... a pair of scissors to trim his nails.

NIGEL DEMPSTER
Mail on Sunday

Submitted by Nigel Pearson.

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

DOMINIC Lawson, who edits the new-look *Sunday Hellograph*, regards plagiarism as an unforgivable crime.

A few years ago, for instance, he noticed that a *Sunday Telegraph* profile of the chess player Jon Speelman included a couple of lines lifted from a piece he himself had written about Speelman. He sent an indignant complaint to Sir Peregrine Worsthorne, then in charge of the paper's Comment section; and the author of the offending profile, Mark Porter, left the paper soon afterwards.

Lawson will, therefore, be distressed to learn that his own paper has now committed an even worse offence.

Last month the *Telegraph* ran a huge exclusive by its Washington correspondent, Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, revealing that "secret documents newly released by the US National Security Agency have identified Cedric Belfrage, the British writer who worked for wartime British intelligence, as a Soviet agent". All very interesting — but hardly new. The entire story had appeared as the lead item in the paper's Mandrake column as long ago as last October. Oddly enough, the hack who wrote the article — Mandrake editor Nick Farrell — has since been sacked by Lawson.

So will the editor now punish his Washington correspondent for rehashing other people's scoops? Probably not. Evans-Pritchard was, in fact, rather reluctant to write the story, pointing out that it had already been published and only complying because he was personally ordered to do it by... Dominic Lawson.

THE *Daily Express* could hardly contain its excitement at the news that two society figures had been sacked as honorary bodyguards to the Queen.

"Scots nobleman Lord Palmer and his neighbour, chartered accountant Alexander Hay, have been forced to resign from the Royal Company of Archers after accusations that they cashed in on the Charles and Diana split," it announced, in a full-page story.

The fun continued the next day with a Griffin cartoon showing Lord Palmer strapped to a target, facing a firing squad of royal archers.

Was the *Express*'s enthusiasm for this tale by any chance related to the fact that Lord Palmer's younger brother, Mark Palmer, just happens to be the paper's assistant editor — and was away from the office, staying with his lordship, when the story broke?

RICHARD ADDIS, the mild-mannered former monk who now edits the *Daily Express*, has one slight disqualification for the job — he is too timid to sack anyone.

He must therefore find less brutal ways of "shedding" unwanted hacks. Soon after taking over at the *Express*, Addis asked Scots novelist Allan Massie to revive the old Beachcomber column. Alas, Massie's efforts at "humour" were universally agreed to be embarrassingly feeble — and so, two weeks ago, Addis hired Peter Tory to write Beachcomber instead.

Unfortunately Massie was not informed of his dismissal and continues to send his jottings in every day — blissfully unaware, since he doesn't read the *Express*, that it is all going straight into the bin. Meanwhile his plans have suffered a setback with the decision by showbiz hack and Burt-Reynolds-lookalike Lester Middlehurst to stay at the *Daily Mail* after all.

Mail editor Paul Dacre made one final appeal to Middlehurst at what was supposed to be the hack's farewell lunch. In addition to a £100,000 salary and several return flights on Concorde to the US each year, Middlehurst is to be given his own show on Channel One Viewer, the absurd cable station owned by the *Mail*'s parent company, Associated Newspapers.

Meanwhile Chris Williams, the mild-mannered senior *Express* executive who had strewn Middlehurst's path with flowers before he arrived, has been stifling his anger. After all, while working out his notice at the *Mail* Middlehurst had been sent on a freebie luxury "cruise" by the *Express*, and the PR for the tour operator has been frantically calling the paper to find out what has happened to the feature.

NEW *Observer* editor Will Hutton is of course a brilliant communicator — and his talents were handsomely displayed during a recent interview with Diana Madill on Radio 5 Live.

How, Madill asked, will you stamp your mark on the paper? Hutton was happy to explain: "I think, you know, it will become generally known what my editorial preoccupations are by the people who work at the paper and readers, so I think that, I mean, I think there's, that's, then of course the ordinary instruments that are open to an editor, I mean, you know, new series of bilateral discussions with individual writers and department heads, you know, that's the way a newspaper's run."

"I hope," he added, "that the *Observer* under my editorship will have a clear and articulate position." Who can doubt it?

Meanwhile the most impressive display of naked ambition came from misery-guts Scottish reporter John Mullin, who was so desperate to get into new Deputy Editor's Paul Webster's old chair at the *Guardian* news desk he flew at his own expense to Barcelona, where Alan Rusbridger was addressing the paper's marketing staff, and waited for four hours in a hotel foyer before begging Rubbisher to give him the job. Unfortunately the editor had already decided to appoint Michael Ellison, the laddish former arts correspondent.

Following this rejection, Mullin made a grovelling speech at a staff meeting apologising for his "idiotic" conduct. Still, his appalling *arslikhan* has not gone unrewarded: out of the blue he has been promoted to night editor.

HALLO! THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN

HALLO! THE PALACE are cock-a-hoop over Diana's heart op visit, and its dire publicity. Courtiers are in a state of barely suppressed ecstasy, gloating rather childishly that she appears to have scored a devastating own goal.

But I am more concerned about the Princess's PR adviser, Jane Atkinson: friends whisper she is already tiring of the Diana circus — after only a few months! Curiously, Jane elected to fly to Chicago rather than be in London to deal with media calls about her boss's latest crass photo opportunity. But Jane, who was staying in the swanky Drake Hotel, was then woken throughout the night by calls from hysterical London tabloids. Will she resign from Diana's service in record time?

HALLO! RELATE, the marriage guidance people, have been sending out press releases announcing a week of fund-raising. A photo of a small girl looking sadly away from the camera has the caption: "Why don't mum and dad talk to each other?" Just underneath, to enforce this poignant message, the charity's patron's name is listed in prominent type — **"HRH The Princess of Wales".**

HALLO! TO Carol Thatcher's launch party for her clever book on Denis. A strange last-night-of-the-Titanic atmosphere haunts the assembled Thatcher camp followers gathered at the posh East India Club in St James's. Sir Tim Bell, alas, is completely tired and emotional. Carol's former beau, Jonathan Aitken, is curiously agitated, and flees as soon as journalists approach. Poor Jonathan, whose Commons career was so cruelly blocked by Carol's mother, is only able to able to attend, of course, because Lady Thatcher is far away in Puerto Rico.

Dear Denis, I am told, has put the boy Mark up for membership of his club, Bucks, but not a single other member will sign the book!

The next day, Carol rings in some distress. Someone, she wails, has walked off with the splendid 6ft replica gin bottle donated by Gordon's! I am able to assure Carol that the culprit is not Denis: the 'bottle' was sighted, being used as a dancing partner, in the early hours at Tramps.

HALLO! *SUSPENSE mounts unbearably at St George's House, Windsor, the unhappy religious 'think tank' founded by Prince Philip. A new enquiry into the activities of megalomaniac warden Professor Richard Whitfield has not yet made public its findings.*

Past internal reports have recorded that Whitfield is regarded by staff as 'devious' and "a bully who likes to pick on one individual, mostly women" (see recent Eyes).

The Marquesa hopes that Baroness Cox, Paul Boeteng MP and other members of the new team will have investigated why Professor Whitfield left his post of Director of Child Care at Save The Children Fund. It was not a happy time.

"His contract was terminated," I am told, forcefully. "He did not want to leave and he was made to leave."

HALLO! AFTER being spattered with paint, my friend Tory party chairman Dr Brian Mawhinney and his wife Betty were awarded compensation for damage to their clothing. But what of charming Mawhinney's hapless side-kick, the former oil-broker Alan Duncan? The handsome MP for Rutland and Melton, you will recall, heroically summoned help while skirmishing with the protesting yobbos.

In his original statement to police, Duncan claimed that the demonstrators had soiled his suit with paint. The immaculately groomed MP put in a claim for over £900 recompense — more than double that claimed by dear, dour Ulsterman Mawhinney.

Alas, the video showed clearly that it was Dr Mawhinney who actually brushed the paint onto Duncan's exquisite suit.

The result? No compensation. The wretched Duncan will now, doubtless, be invoicing his boss for the £900 !!!

HALLO! *MY clever friend Anthony Scrivener QC has always had a way with words.*

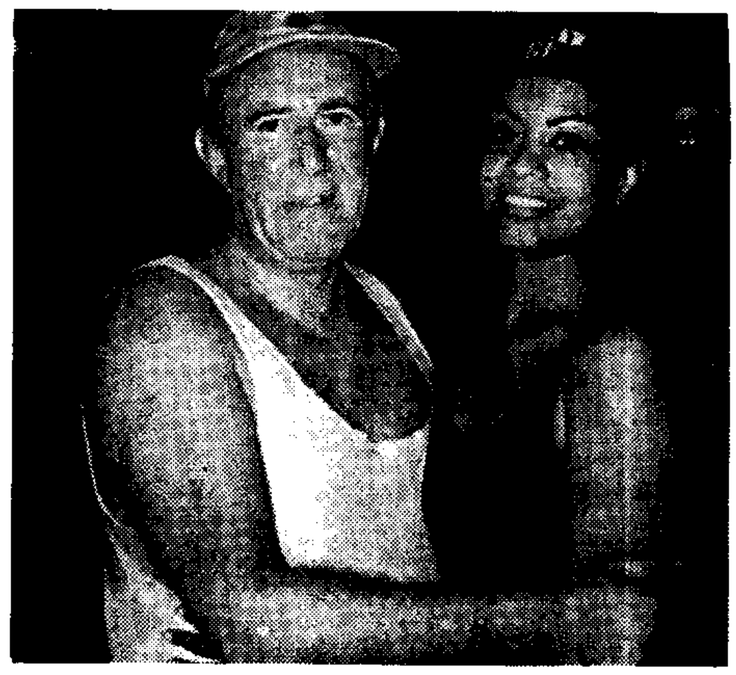
Last year, in his closing speech on behalf of Shirley Porter at the inquiry into shenanigans at Westminster council, Anthony complained eloquently about Dame Shirley's lengthy ordeal.

"This investigation," he declared, "has gone on rather longer than the second world war and has still not been concluded."

Appearing on behalf of Owen Oyston at Liverpool crown court last week, Anthony asked one of the prosecution witnesses why she had waited six and a half years before making her allegation of rape. This intolerable delay was, he pointed out, "the length of the second world war".

If another of Anthony's clients, Asil Nadir, remains holed up in Northern Cyprus for another few years before returning to help Scotland Yard with its inquiries, the imaginative QC will be able to use his favourite catchphrase once again!

"Sleep with me and I'll sell the story for a stack."



HALLO! **SNAPPER Terry O'Neil tells me the true story behind a fabled, much loved photograph — of a paunchy, middle-aged white man, in vest and baseball cap, clutching an Asian babe.**

The scene was the luxury Sandy Lane Hotel, Barbados; the camera was O'Neil's, but it was borrowed by Sir Nicholas Lloyd, then 'editor' of the *Daily Express*, **who was in Barbados on one of his legendary freebies.**

Sir Nicholas wished to capture a magic moment in the exciting life of charismatic bachelor Andrew 'Brillo Pad' Neil.

The rest, as they say, is history. *(Please reprint the photo to remind readers what you are talking about. Ed.)*

HALLO! THE MARQUESA knows not to trust Spanish men. Not even the General! So we certainly won't be repeating absurd tittle-tattle from employees of the exclusive Via Ronda farmhouse apartments near Seville.

Handsomely-moustached young room staff claim that a portly British gentleman uncannily identical to Leicestershire MP David Ashby stayed at the complex for four days last November, only emerging from his hacienda to pester them for details of health-giving male-only saunas in Seville.

What rubbish! Nothing could be more ridiculous, insists the Marquesa. Mr Ashby was in the High Court just weeks later insisting on oath that he was as straight as a die. Pillars of family values certainly have no time for men-only saunas!

HALLO! *HOW delightful to see Britain's newest toff putting himself about! Historian Andrew "Snobby" Roberts looked wonderful on Newsnight the other day making snooty fun of vulgarians who invite that ghastly imposter Hello! into "their lovely homes". Barely stopping to change his hand-made shirt, Roberts was at it again last week, grandly lauding the "classful" society in his Sunday Times column. And quaffing champagne at Hatchards Authors of the Year reception, we overhear him boasting magisterially about his "private income".*

So where, we wonder, does Snobby's "private income" come from? Grouse moors? Diamond mines? A string of country houses? The Marquesa fears that it derives from the sale of the family chain of Kentucky Fried Chicken franchises. But we promise not to tell any of Andrew's new upper class friends!

HALLO! **THE vivacious Carla Powell, Italian wife of former Thatcher henchman Sir Charles Powell, was all set to be a candidate for Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party. Orders however came down from spoilsport Sir Jams that Carla had to attend a meeting in Bristol to get some training. "Bristol?" trilled Carla. "Where is Bristol?" Sadly she will not now be gracing the hustings.**

The Marquesa

IAN LANG once wrote scripts for *That Was The Week That Was* in the 60s which helped destroy the Macmillan government.

But nothing the current president of the board of trade wrote was ever as amusing, or damaging to the establishment, as his current rejection of a recommendation of the monopolies and mergers commission (MMC).

The MMC wanted to allow the two big electricity generating companies National Power and PowerGen to take over two regional electricity companies, thus creating "vertical integration" between generators and distributors. Lang said "no", throwing the entire electricity industry into turmoil, enraging the fat cats, knocking £1 billion off share prices and striking a blow for all those who have had to contribute to swollen share profits for speculators and insurance companies every time they switch on the lights.

Lang was also cocking a snook at his predecessor Michael Heseltine, who believed that nothing should interfere with the market. For that reason Hezza put a leading City figure, Graeme Odgers, in charge of the monopolies commission. Very wisely, Lang did not consult Hezza before taking his decision.

THE Tories' recent parliamentary selection meeting in Hackney South was enlivened by John Redwood protégé Harry "Flog' em" Phibbs, the barking former Tory student *Obergruppenführer*.

Cheerfully endorsing hanging — "Yes, yes, yes, yes" — the would-be MP was confronted by a dangerous wet: "What about miscarriages of justice?" asked the impertinent enemy within.

"Ah, science!" mused Phibbs, eyes swivelling excitedly. "Soon, every prison will be able to have a freezer. Pop the criminal in. And if new evidence emerges a few years later, take him out again. Fresh as a daisy! No harm done."

Amazingly Hackney's Tory ingrates chose someone else. The *Eye* can't imagine why.

WHEN the government is asked precise but awkward questions — for example about NHS bed closures or lethal arms export licenses — the stock reply is that the "information is not centrally available" or "the question can not be answered on the grounds of disproportionate cost".

Frustrated by such obfuscation, the Labour MP Brian Donohoe asked the department of trade to detail how many questions had been given the "disproportionate cost" reply. Last month DTI minister John Taylor replied: "The number of questions tabled to my department since 1987-88 is as follows..." and provided a list of totals. But he continued: "The other information can only be provided at disproportionate cost."

THE launch of "new" Labour's local government campaign has highlighted its plan for directly elected mayors of major cities. But who would Tony Blair's notoriously paranoid clique trust with the job in London?

Step forward Margaret Hodge, impeccably "new" Labour MP for Barking and Dagenham, ex-leader of Islington council and FOB (Friend of Blair).

Hodge — dubbed Enver by Islington colleagues after Albanian dictator Enver Hodgea — desperately wants the job. She has excellent Blairite credentials: she provoked one of the longest social worker's strikes in local government history; she attacked the *Evening Standard* for exposing abuse in Islington's children's homes; and finally she quit the borough for a lucrative post with accountants Price Waterhouse (see *Eyes passim ad nauseam* for details).

More importantly she is now in pole position for the new post having been elected chair of the London Group of Labour MPs. But how did Enver swing this? The chairpersonship had been a hard left sinecure for years, most recently being held by Jeremy Corbyn, the cycling loony left MP for Islington North and one of Enver's sworn enemies.

Hodge beat Corbyn by a single vote after two lefties failed to show up for the meeting. So if Hodge becomes Labour's candidate for mayor, they will be responsible. Who are the guilty parties? Step forward Bernie Grant and Diane Abbott.

WHEN Tim Eggar, energy minister, launched his *Energy Report* (195 glossy pages; colour maps of North Sea oilfields; a snip at £40, etc) he was asked by hacks if it was a coincidence that since the Brent Spar fiasco, every oil platform disposed of had been brought ashore to be dismantled on land.

Eggar replied that these platforms were based in shallow water and it had always been anticipated that they would *not* be sunk. Hmm. They could have been towed into deeper water and dumped there, which is what the oil industry had always wanted to do. But at present it does not fancy another uproar about its litter.

Eggar was also asked if, when he leaves parliament, he will rejoin the oil industry. He replied: "I don't know". And added, mysteriously, that he did not know whether "rejoin" was the right description as he had been a non-executive director of Charterhouse Petroleum. He was an oilman, right enough; and oil companies will soon be waving cheque books at him. He will follow a long line of ex-ministers eager to show private industry where the buried treasure can be found.

NEWTS everywhere are delighted by the outcome of a court case in Harrogate.

Giant quarrying firm Tilcon has been fined £1,500 for destroying a great crested newt habitat that was supposed to be protected by the 1981 wildlife and countryside act.

Details of the case will no doubt be studied in John Major's Huntingdon constituency, where Britain's biggest newt colony stands in the way of a £30 million development proposed by Lord Hanson — a generous donor to Mr Major's party.

"Just a fruit juice please Brian, beer goes straight to my head."

NEW Labour MP John Trickett has not so far resigned his seat on Leeds city council, of which he was leader until earlier this year, and the dual role has already thrown up an interesting conflict.

The Jon Trickett who is a councillor campaigned to make Leeds a top sporting venue, the home of Yorkshire cricket and England test matches. But the Jon Trickett who is MP for Hemsworth is now supporting moves to relocate Yorkshire Cricket Club on to a greenfield site near Wakefield.

Coincidentally, boundary changes are understood to mean that after the next general election the potential new site will be located in... Hemsworth.

IT IS no secret that the treasury had its eye on cutting the department of national heritage's budget by 40 percent in 1995, the big argument in treasury-DNH circles being over the words "substitution" and "additionality".

In layman's terms substitution means the treasury robs Peter (the national lottery) to pay Paul (reduce the PSBR; cut taxes; etc). The arts lobby prefers "additionality", where existing grants from taxation are maintained in real terms and lottery money is used to *increase* access to the arts.

The national heritage select committee, official arbiter between the treasury and the department, has been deliberating over this for ages and has finally published its report. It is music to the ears of all in the arts, stating that "the money available to all four Arts Councils should be, at the least, maintained in real terms year by year".

It continues: "The government should make clear... its promise on additionality of national lottery funds." Two cheers, then three, if the government accepts the report...

THE following MPs voted against the government's mild proposals for divorce reform:

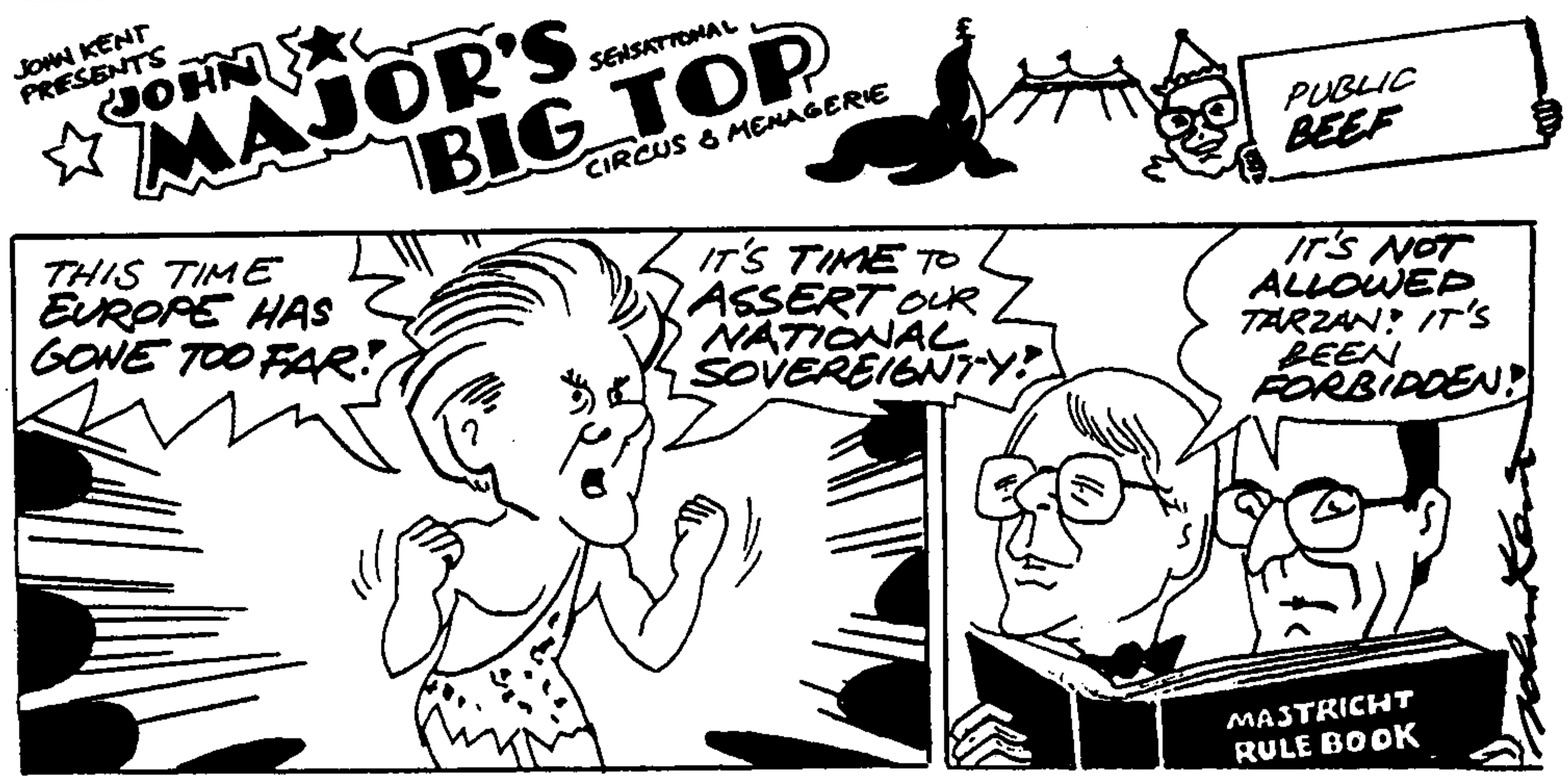
Hartley Booth (Tory, Finchley), married, who had a spectacular affair with his researcher Emily Barr.

Dick Spring (Tory, Bury St Edmunds), divorced, who was lured into a three-in-a-bed romp by a source for the *News of the World*.

Michael Mates (Tory, East Hampshire), divorced in 1980 and married again.

Sir Nicholas Scott (Tory, Chelsea), divorced in 1976 and married again.

Tony Marlow (Tory, Northampton North), who had children by his late wife and his secretary, and who for many years divided his time between the two.


JOHN KENT PRESENTS
JOHN MAJOR'S SENSATIONAL BIG TOP CIRCUS & MENAGERIE
PUBLIC BEEF
THIS TIME EUROPE HAS GONE TOO FAR!
IT'S TIME TO ASSERT OUR NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY!
IT'S NOT ALLOWED TARZAN! IT'S BEEN FORBIDDEN!
MAASTRICHT RULE BOOK

AS DISSENT rages within the Tory party at least the Eurosceptics, united by their hatred of all things Euro-, must be getting along famously. Er, not quite.

Although they share strong reservations about a single currency, the Euro-rebels also share another deep dislike — of each other. William Cash, MP for Stafford, has taken to declaring that he is "Britain's De Gaulle". But instead of heartily agreeing with this figurehead of Euro-loathing, fellow sceptics have dismissed his suggestion of De Gaulle and renamed him Britain's "Own Goal".

'Backbiter'

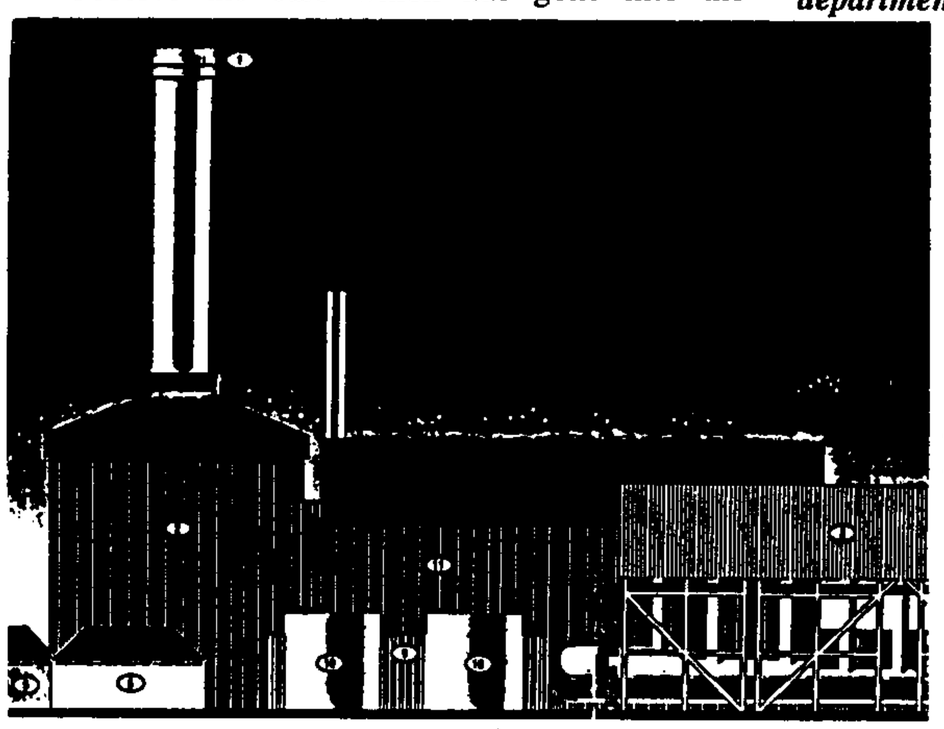
NOOKS and CORNERS

"POWER stations can be fine buildings but it must be demonstrated," once remarked Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, designer of those great "temples of power" on the Thames at Battersea and Bankside.

It is true; and in the decades after the second world war good architects like Farmer & Dark were hired to ameliorate the gigantic mass of those lumps of technology that demand for electricity obliged to scatter about the landscape of Britain.

That power stations can be fine buildings is clearly not a thought, however, which has occurred to Messrs Powergen, as my illustration suggests. Times have changed, after all. This "design" for a £120 million combined cycle gas turbine power station is one that a child might assemble with Lego and Meccano.

Observe the care which has gone into the



modelling of the 270-ft high chimney and the subtlety of its positioning on top of the boldly designed box containing the waste heat recovery boiler. I do not suppose an architect has been consulted at all. Why bother? This one is not for the sensitive banks of the Thames, after all, but for poor, benighted Gartcosh — and, besides: such useful things do not need planning permission from the local authority but merely a nod from the secretary of state — for Scotland.

Gartcosh is part of the "rust belt" east of Glasgow, a cruelly abused area of industrial dereliction. Powergen's gas fired power station is to be built on the site of closed steelworks. The long-suffering locals had hoped for a rather nicer, and cleaner replacement. But privatised Powergen clearly could not care a damn about the people of Gartcosh, or about anyone else who might have to look at its hideous progeny. The local authority is calling for a public inquiry, as well it might.

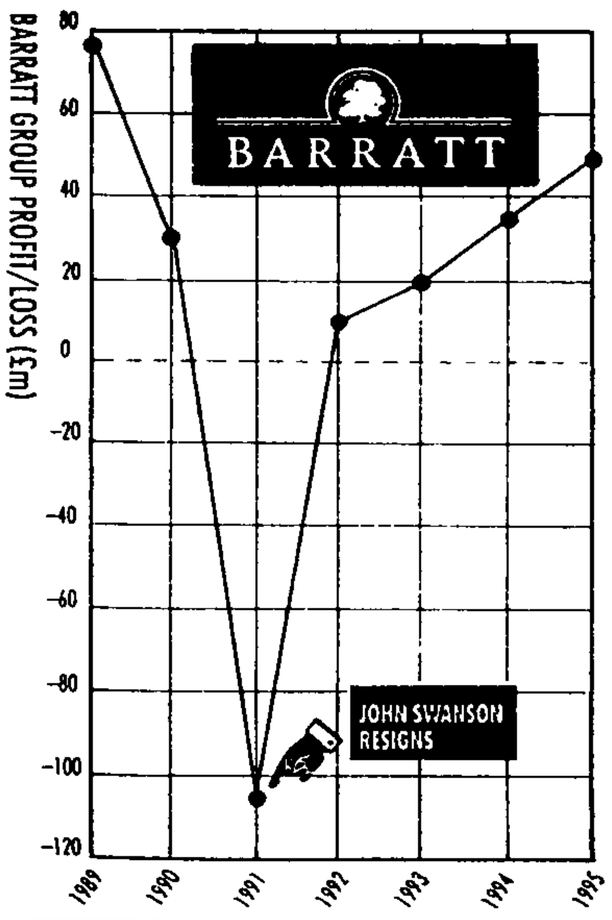
CREDIT where credit is due: English Heritage has just published its sixth Buildings at Risk Register and, in the accompanying news release, it highlights the case of Teddington Hall, a listed building in Richmond owned by the department of the environment.

Paul Drury, the departing regional director for London and the South East (Eyes passim), now freed from the constraint of being Sir Jocelyn Stevens's minder, is at last able to speak his mind. "Teddington Hall is a classic example of a government department flouting the government's own guidelines on the sale and care of vacant historic buildings. This is a grade II house, with strong potential for reuse, which has been left empty for 15 years and is now in a deplorable condition..."

Teddington Hall is a neo-Tudor house of the 1860s which was vacated by the National Physical Laboratory in 1979 and left to rot. In 1991 it was cited by the national audit commission as a wasting publicly-owned asset. Contrary to government policy, the DoE declined to offer it for sale while claiming crown immunity from the legal obligations imposed by listed building law. Such is the example set by the government department charged with listing and protecting the nation's historic architecture.

'Piloti'

British Management Part 35.
JOHN SWANSON, Managing Director Tay Homes plc, Chairman Barratt Homes plc until 1991.



RED FACE OF THE WEEK

WHILE Birmingham busmen were being investigated by Inspector Knacker over allegations of corruption and irregularities involving public sector employees, the Midland Transport Executive, Centro, brought independent consultants to check their computers.

Centro was not best pleased when the consultants then uncovered an even less savoury matter: a computer system stuffed full of pornography.

Horrified managers immediately called in the porn squad, who came in just as their colleagues from the fraud squad investigating the alleged contracts irregularities were moving out.

Even Knacker's hardened porn-watchers were appalled by what the Centro computers held. All of which leaves purchase officer and computer boffin John Hillier — who is being questioned in relation to the contracts — with rather a lot of explaining to do.

Pseuds Corner

Homeless people have an unbelievable way of dressing, which I do find very inspiring.

CHRISTIAN LACROIX
Sunday Telegraph Magazine

Biodiversity is the endless dark snake of celluloid DNA that connects us with the planet.

A.A. GILL
Sunday Times

This, one thinks as one advances to one's table, is what a restaurant should really be like. It's not difficult to imagine Cocteau climbing perilously along the top of the banquette, bringing Proust his cloak as the great writer waits by the door.

WILL SELF
Observer

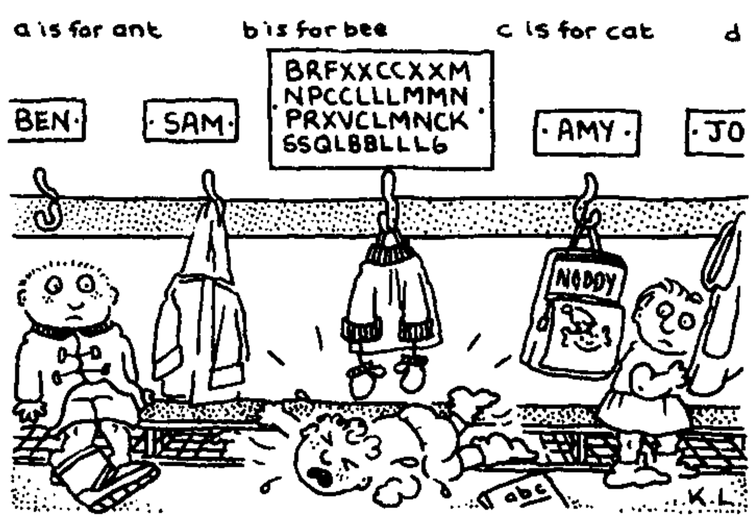
Mrs Follett explains that she was attracted to Stevenage because it was the first new town to be built by Labour after the war. "You still feel that 1945 vision is there," she says. "They still give the kids free milk in the schools every day. Community still matters to them. It's a bit like an expatriate community; these are East Enders who have been bombed out of London and dumped in Hertfordshire. I was born in Jamaica and grew up in South Africa and have spent my life moving around, often in expatriate situations, so I can relate to that."

The Times

I like taking my clothes off. I have a lot of friends who are like that, do you know what I mean? Pissing, shitting. Getting our dicks out. I guess we're just like weeping babies underneath.

DAMIEN HIRST
Observer

Yesterday was a Bad Day for Brfxxccxxmnpccclllmmnprxvclmnckssqlbbl1116, a five-year-old Swede whose parents have been fined for not giving him a name. They say the name



(pronounced "Albin") is "a pregnant expressionistic development that we see as an artistic creation".

Independent

Three librarians trapped in a bombed out library form the basis of writer Jyll Bradley's latest work, The Fruit Has Turned to Jam in the Fields...

In Fruit... the women take on different personas in the room which becomes one of conscience. They borrow things from the room — such as experiences.

"They also take on the role of characters from Dad's Army, which is obviously relevant because of its approach to male sexuality," Jyll explains.

The Stage

Golf in the Kingdom
An Exploration of the Inner Game
Stephen Cohen, Fred Shoemaker & Brian Bergstrom
"Ye'll come away from the links with a new hold on life, that is certain if ye play the game with all your heart." — MICHAEL MURPHY (as SHIVA IRONS).

The game of golf provides many opportunities to enhance the journey of self-discovery. It can be experienced not only as an athletic endeavor, but also as a metaphor for the way one lives. Just as in life, issues of self-confidence, fear, trust, discipline, and awareness emerge in the conflict between the ego's desire for success and the inner self's ability to achieve.

During these five days, teaching methods gleaned from a study of the inner game will be utilized, as well as principles from psycho-synthesis and gestalt, to explore the inner self and how one interferes with its emergence. Two days will be spent on field trips to the Monterey Peninsula where participants will practice and play in some of the most beautiful golf country in the world.

Esalen Catalog 1996, Big Sur, California

CONTRIBUTORS: Ms C. Cain, S. Kendrick, M. Carlson, P. Sarris, S. Chisnall, K. Greengrass, G. Kite, M. Toy.

£10 paid for entries

EYE TV

Karaoke (BBC1/C4)

YOU have to hand it to Dennis Potter. When he had the relative misfortune to be alive, he could look back at a writing career characterised initially by immense promise, later by magisterial fulfilment of that promise, and more recently by self-indulgence and a sad shortage of ideas.

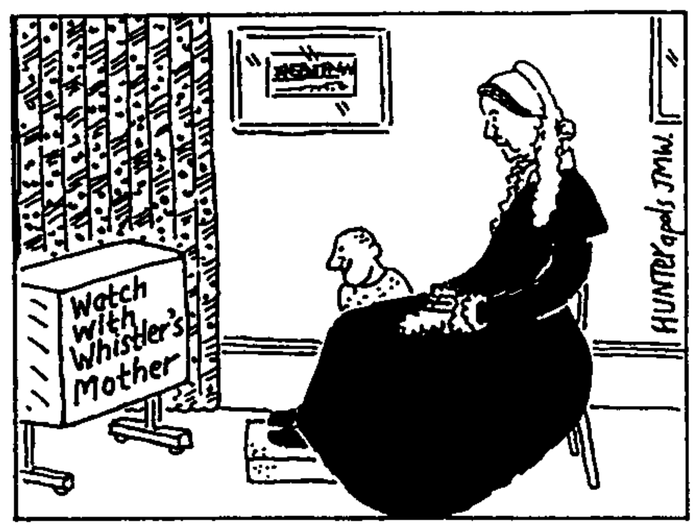
Though no one will now admit it, Potter in his final years was all but washed up. Despite the usual ecstatic reviews, *Lipstick On My Collar* was a surprisingly mundane retread of his previous hits; while his last TV film, *Midnight Movie*, was scrupulously overlooked by most critics on the grounds that it was unmitigated bilge.

Death, of course, has changed everything. Lesser self-publicists, told they had but a few months to live, would have thrown down their pens and retreated to the Bahamas. Potter had other ideas. First he went on television and, in a now infamous interview with Melvyn Bragg, announced his forthcoming extinction to an already grieving nation. Then he prepared his own memorial.

Two four-part serials, **Karaoke** and *Cold Lazarus*, would be completed in his dying weeks, and then co-produced in a unique collaboration by the BBC and Channel 4. Yes, of course we'll collaborate, said Alan Yentob and Michael Grade. How could they not? Fulfilling the dying wish of television's most esteemed dramatist would be impossibly good PR. As it turned out, they fulfilled virtually every one of his dying wishes. *Cold Lazarus*, a special effect-laden science-fiction epic set in the 24th century, cost a fortune. *Karaoke*, although more modestly set in the present, required certain scenes to be shot in central London. Shooting films in central London is notoriously expensive and troublesome, but that's where the scenes were shot. It's what Dennis would have wanted.

In the unstoppable tidal wave of gush that has followed, expectations have been raised to ridiculous levels. Only a work of towering genius could live up to *Karaoke*'s pre-publicity. It's hard to say what we were expecting when we sat down on Sunday evening, but we were expecting something pretty special. Here was that rare beast, the genuinely prestigious drama serial. Every shot oozed money.

Promising young actors like Beth Goddard and Steven Mackintosh had taken walk-on parts. Better a walk-on than no part at all. Albert Finney, cast in the pivotal Man Very Much Like



Dennis Potter role, added a dash of Hollywood glamour. Indeed, it wasn't until well into the episode's fourth minute that you realised there was anything wrong at all. For it was at this vital moment that Roy Hudd, playing Finney's loyal literary agent, said the words "I'm going to be date for my late." You assumed you had misheard. Then, seconds later, "That would make of sot of lense."

From one end of the country to the other, hearts sank. Here was a character whose chief verbal tic — whose main characteristic no less — was a tendency to lapse into humourless spoonerisms. "I mo have a deeting," Hudd said later, and you could only feel sorry for him. Potter is said to have insisted on Hudd for this role, presumably as cruel revenge for some previous slight.

In any other serial, such a woeful gimmick would have been excised from the first draft. Here it served to remind you that this was the first draft. Beautifully produced, skilfully acted, directed with rather more flair than Potter's favourite director Renny Rye has previously demonstrated, *Karaoke* still felt oddly unformed because, by any normal standards, it was unformed. Anybody else's script would have gone through countless other drafts before it reached the screen. Potter, because he was Potter, and about to die, was allowed to get away with it. "Cure poincidence," as Hudd put it.

The huge thumping irony of all this is that *Karaoke* does seem to have had the makings of something special. True, it uses all his old tricks and repeats all his old obsessions; but the purity of Potter's solipsism has given them a new and surprising intensity. Death must have concentrated his mind wonderfully. At last he could stop pretending that he wanted to write about anything other than himself. *Karaoke* is Potter's memorial to himself and, more importantly, his own high opinion of himself. It's almost abstract in its rampant egomania.

Unfortunately egomaniacs rarely entertain such comments from outsiders as "Sorry, Dennis, but this bit doesn't work at all." In *Karaoke*, Potter's words have been treated as holy writ, a last artistic will and testament, when they could have done with some serious editing.

Respect for the dead can go too far. Everyone's determination that *Karaoke* should be recognised as a masterpiece may have prevented it from becoming one.

'Couch Potato'

MEDIA NEWS

JOHN PRESCOTT got a big laugh at the BAFTA awards with his quip: "Now I'm middle class I don't keep my coal in the bath any more... I keep it in the bidet!"

It was a good joke — the comedian Roy Hudd certainly thought so when he used it on his Radio Two show *The News Huddlines* on the Thursday before the Sunday night BAFTAs.

Prescott liked it so much he used the joke twice on the Sunday: first on *Breakfast With Frost*. In the past, Tony Blair's press secretary Alastair Campbell has been known to use Hudd's writers to supply Blair and Prescott with one-liners for the party conference — a case of "new" Labour, old jokes.

MORE on the BBC's Arabic service and the controversial *Panorama* on corporal and capital punishment in friendly old Saudi Arabia.

The Arabic service was abruptly shut down after BBC Worldwide fell out with its Arabic partner, Orbit Communications, which is owned by a prince of the Saudi royal family. The contract was terminated after the BBC broadcast the *Panorama* edition and Orbit prevented its broadcast via its satellite link.

In a related incident, Reuters Television was granted news access by the BBC to broadcast details of the *Panorama* programme, but when it was realized how politically sensitive the documentary was the agency's most senior UK executives went into a long and fevered huddle. Eventually they decided not to carry any details of the programme. Could their decision have had anything to do with the massive subscription fee worth millions of pounds Reuters gets from Saudi Arabia for its television bulletins? Surely not.

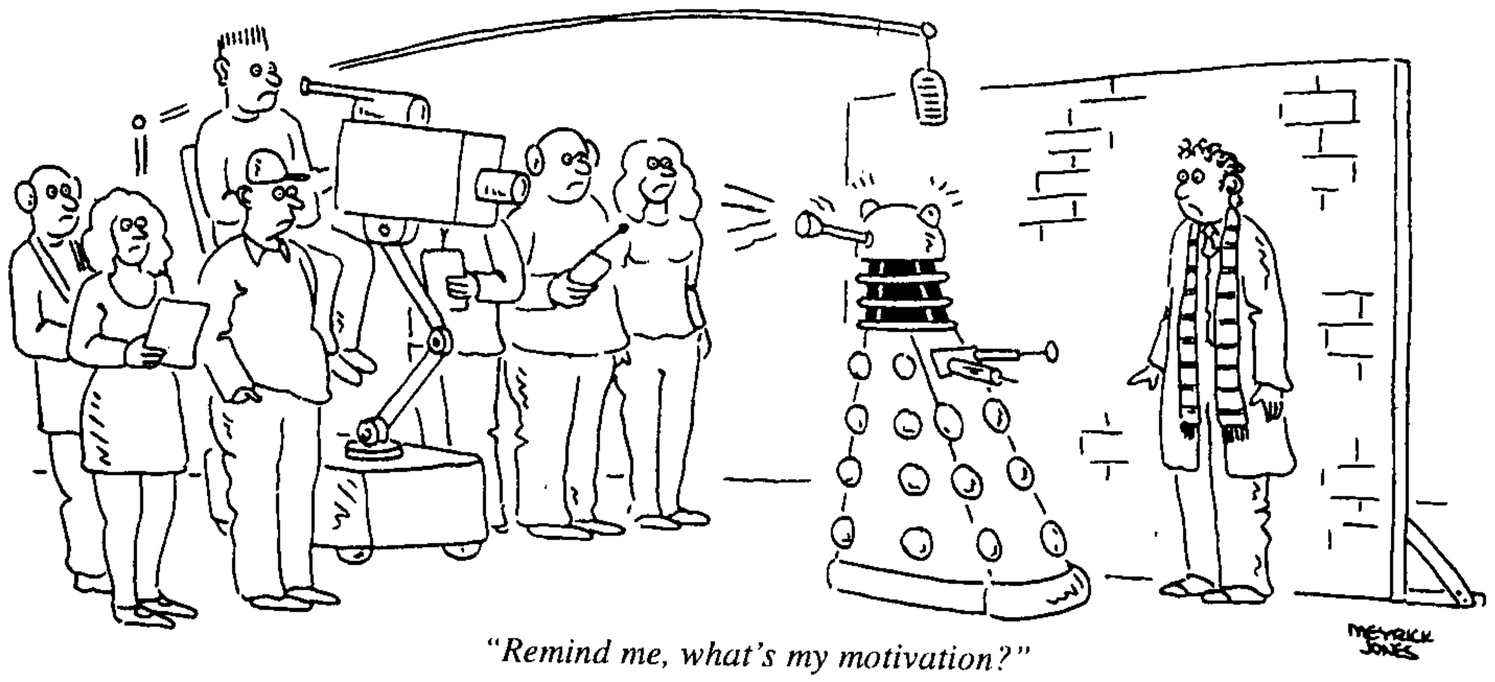
Back at the Beeb, meanwhile, when staff were told the service was closing, they had two hours to vacate the newsroom and all databases were being wiped. News editor Charles Richards irritated staff by suggesting they might find work at the Disney channel and provided them with the number.

Then last week Hugh Williams, aka Mr Sue Lawley, a senior Birtist at BBC Worldwide, saw the 200 Arabic service staff who are under threat of redundancy, and his first words of sympathy to them were: "I've only got half an hour". He offered no hope of renewed contracts and staff walked out of the meeting in disgust. Many will have to return to their countries of origin now they have no regular work here and face an uncertain welcome as former staff of a politically sensitive TV channel.

Staff asked why, if this obviously inflammatory *Panorama* programme was to be shown, had they not been allowed to make programmes on other more serious human rights abuses and corruption within the royal family. BBC Worldwide managers refused to discuss the matter and now refuse to confirm reports of a healthy compensation package for them from Orbit because of the premature termination of the contract.

Meanwhile other Worldwide service hacks hope they will not suffer similar fates if the BBC's other partners drop out of contracts at the first sign of criticism of their home country.

Edword on Edward
HE WAS COMPLETELY UNSUITED TO THE JOB...
HE WAS UNTRAINED FOR IT...
AND IN THE END...
HE CARRIED ON DOING IT ANYWAY
"Er... Er... um... Er..."
Kal Pyne



"Remind me, what's my motivation?"

***NEWSNIGHT* editor Peter Horrocks' outspoken attack on the "robot" MPs of "new" Labour — too terrified of Peter Mandelson and other Blair cronies to speak their mind — was predictably seized upon by the party's enemies.**

What *was* surprising was that Horrocks' article (in the little known *Parliamentary Review*) was published at all. For months now any "extra-curricular" writing by BBC journalists has to be cleared by a special Bias Monitoring Unit (BMU), led by former *Tod'ay* programme editor Phil Harding.

So terrified is Auntie about allegations of political bias that editors of all BBC news programmes have been ordered to interview equal numbers of MPs from the three major political parties and to make the figures balance on a weekly basis. Such broadcasting by numbers makes nonsense of the corporation's much vaunted "editorial judgement" and has led to the ridiculous spectacle of Liberal Democrat MPs being asked about the private finance initiative and the accuracy of the treasury's public sector borrowing requirement (PSBR) forecasts.

If anything the BMU has been even stricter. One BBC producer was prevented from writing a party conference commentary last year for the *New Statesman* because it was adjudged too pro-Labour. The same hapless hack — who teaches media studies part time — was told not to deliver the (public) inaugural lecture for his course for the same reason.

But Horrocks' attack on Labour is not the only piece to have slipped through the BMU's net. BBC economics correspondent Evan Davis's paean to John Major's policy on enterprise — which Davis described as "effective, unifying and distinctive" — was cleared for publication in the *Independent on Sunday* by Harding. So was an attack on Blair in the *Spectator* penned by political correspondent Steve Richards. It is so obvious that Harding's job is to silence critics of the Tories that corporation wags have rechristened his team B*N*U — for Brown Nosing Unit.

QUESTION: How many BBC employees does it take to change a light bulb? Answer: Members of staff are not permitted to change the light bulbs themselves.

First, they have to phone the "help desk". The help desk assesses the problem and then sends an "operative" to change the light bulb. Then the staff member who was left without a light receives a detailed memo from Haden Broadcasting Engineering Services with details of the fault: "Light bulb for angle poise lamp" and even details of work carried out: "Replaced 1 X 60W lamp".

This speedy process then requires the supervisor's signature and the manager's signature, not to mention the "customer's" signature. All in a day's work for the efficiency-led Birtian BBC.

OILY DJs, experts at promoting their own shows with dismal jingles, are having to work harder in these days of cross-media ownership to keep their bosses smirking.

Nicky Horne was recently heard to comment on Virgin Radio: "It's a beautiful clear sky today over London, and as that record was playing I could see a Virgin plane flying over, one of the new Airbuses. Beautiful."

Aagh! Pass the in-flight sick bag...

LIBEL NEWS

JEFFREY ARCHER ought to be more aware than most authors of the law of libel after his adventures in the high court a few years ago. And yet his new book *The Fourth Estate* — which he describes as a "novelography" largely based on fact — includes at least two dangerous defamations.

The first occurs in a scene where a press baron, Keith Townsend, surveys the framed copies of famous headlines on his office wall. There is the *New York Star* of 23 January 1963: "Kennedy Assassinated in Dallas". The *Continent* of 30 July 1981: "Happy Ever After", above a picture of Charles and Diana on their wedding day. And, finally, the *Globe* of 17 May 1991: "Richard Branson Deflowered Me, Claims Virgin".

Kennedy was indeed assassinated, and Charles and Diana were indeed married — but since when has Richard Branson been accused of deflowering virgins? Even the American woman who turned up in the tabloids last week only claimed he had touched her breasts. One trusts the bearded tycoon will issue libel writs forthwith.

Keith Townsend, whom Archer admits is closely modelled on Rupert Murdoch, describes his journalistic principles thus: "The truth, the whole truth, and anything but the truth. Just as long as it sells papers." This shocking slur on the integrity of the saintly Digger is all the more surprising since Archer's pisspoor book is being published by HarperCollins and serialised in the *Sunday Times* — both of which are owned by Rupert Murdoch.

I-I-I Special

THE first I-I-I Special Award for outstanding self-advertisement goes to Stuart Barnes, editor of rugger-bugger magazine *First XV*.

In the last six issues of the mag, Barnes has treated his readers to 49 photographs of himself — a Robert-Maxwell-sized record.

Issue 1	5 pics	Issue 4	6 pics
Issue 2	11 pics	Issue 5	7 pics
Issue 3	8 pics	Issue 6	12 pics

Average number of photos per issue: 8.17

MAGWATCH: COSMO GIRLS

WHEN spiky Mandi Norwood replaced the indescribablyraunchy Marcelle D'Argy Smith as editor of *Cosmopolitan* last year, we were promised a new era of positive stories encouraging women to develop their careers and break through the "glass ceiling". But what job should the modern *Cosmo* girl aspire to? Here are the suggestions so far:

December 1995: This issue is dominated by a five-page feature on women who "represent Nineties feminism, Hollywood style, a sisterhood that eats together, leaves together and pays their own way". Exciting if ungrammatical stuff. Who are these go-ahead professionals? Why, Los Angeles hookers — "the world's most expensive call girls".

January 1996: An ingenious solution to the problem of student hardship — a three-page guide to "Students on the Game". According to 21-year-old Suki: "I was a virgin when I began my degree but now I have sex with up to eight men a week... I charge £45 for oral and £60 for full sex. I have managed to pay off quite a bit of my overdraft..."

February: For readers who are too squeamish to pursue a career in prostitution, *Cosmo* helpfully offers an alternative role-model — "the little girl who became Europe's biggest porn star."

March: A disappointing month, with scarcely a strumpet or stripper to be seen. Still, the feature headed "my twin sister is now my brother" provides a useful insight into the work of a plastic surgeon.

April: Back to business, with "Couples Who Go To Prostitutes", a four-page analysis of "a new trend in sexual behaviour. More and more couples are hiring prostitutes to join them in bed. Word on the street is that demand has doubled in the past year." Plenty of job-opportunities, then.

May: Bravely persevering with her policy of feminist, high-quality, aspirational features, Norwood treats us to three steamy pages in which "A young married guy with kids confesses 'Why I go to prostitutes'."

June: According to the advance billing, this will amply demonstrate Norwood's ability to vary the formula. We are promised an "undercover" investigation into... "why straight women visit lesbian prostitutes".

Whatever happened to recipes and knitting patterns?

I-BSkyB

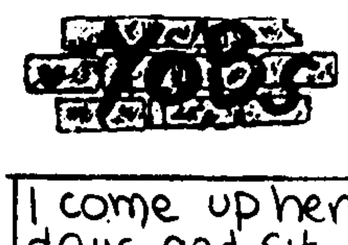
BY now I imagine the whole nation is glued to Murder One on Sky or BBC2.

On Sky we're way ahead on about Episode 16.

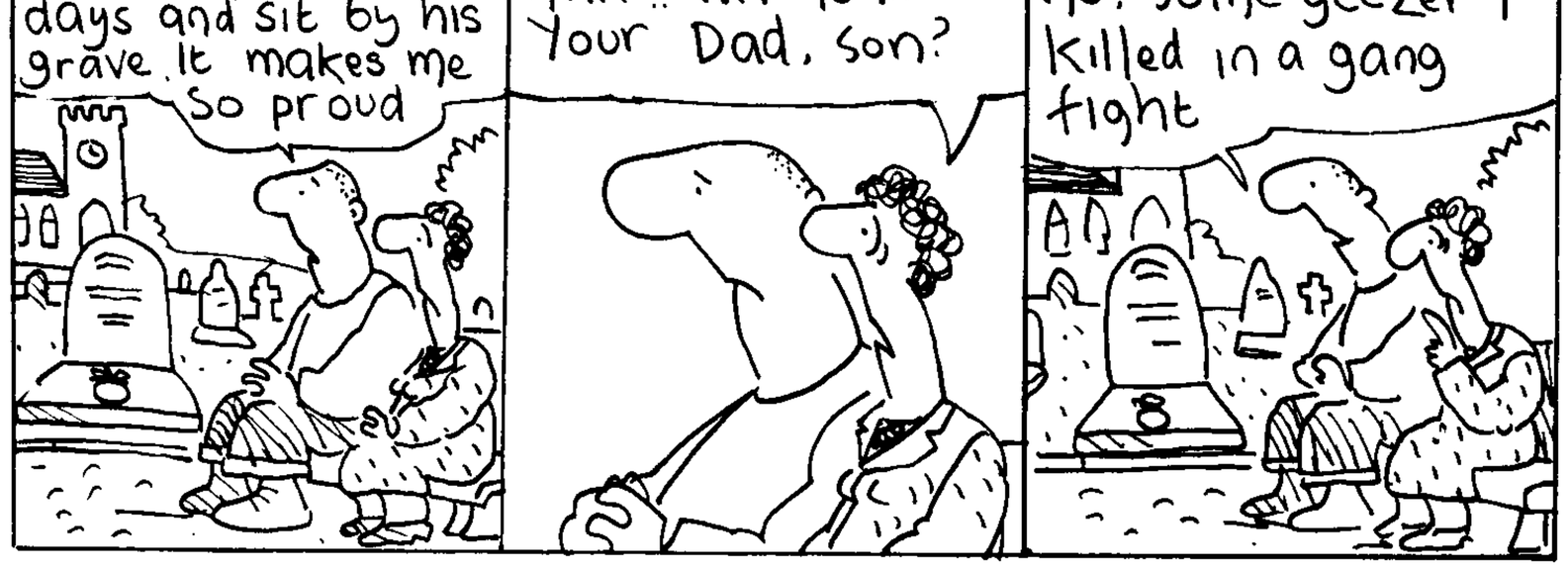
PAULA YATES
The Sun

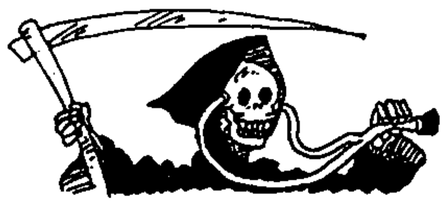
CONTRIBUTOR: P. Grogan.

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.



HUSBAND


I come up here some days and sit by his grave. It makes me so proud
Ahrr.. who is it Your Dad, son?
No. Some geezer I killed in a gang fight



DOING THE ROUNDS

ON 16 MARCH a posse of six managers from University College London hospitals trust went to Boston (America) on a four-day "all in" fact finding mission. At the helm was director of personnel Sandra Meadows, who wanted to pick up a few tips on how to set up a new hospital.

The trust plans to close down the **Middlesex, UCH** and **Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospitals** and replace them with a new building with a hundred fewer beds and 600 fewer staff somewhere near the Tottenham Court Road. Why the intrepid team needed to go to America to visit a new hospital when the allegedly state-of-the-art Chelsea and Westminster is on their doorstep is unclear. All six could have travelled there and back on the Piccadilly line for £13.20, and the money saved might, with hindsight, have been better used to employ more maintenance engineers to prevent the UCH boiler room flood on 21 March. The eight-foot gush on the basement corridor resulted in the evacuation of all patients and closure of the site for four days.

● JULIE GOULDING, chief executive of **Cheviot and Wansbeck NHS trust**, has received a stern letter from John Anderson, Newcastle University's postgraduate dean, about the paucity of on-call accommodation for junior staff. "This problem was first identified almost two years ago and must be resolved in the near future. Failure to remedy this unsatisfactory situation when so much time has already been allowed to seek a solution could put at risk the continued recognition of house-officer posts at Wansbeck and could also cast doubt on the continued recognition of senior house officer posts in medicine, a matter for which the **Royal College of Physicians** is responsible."

● WOMEN living in **North Wales** who need an abortion may have to pay to travel to **Chester** for an initial consultation and then to **Liverpool** for the operation after **North Wales Health Authority** (formerly Clwyd and Gwynedd HAs) awarded a contract to the **British Pregnancy Advisory Service**.

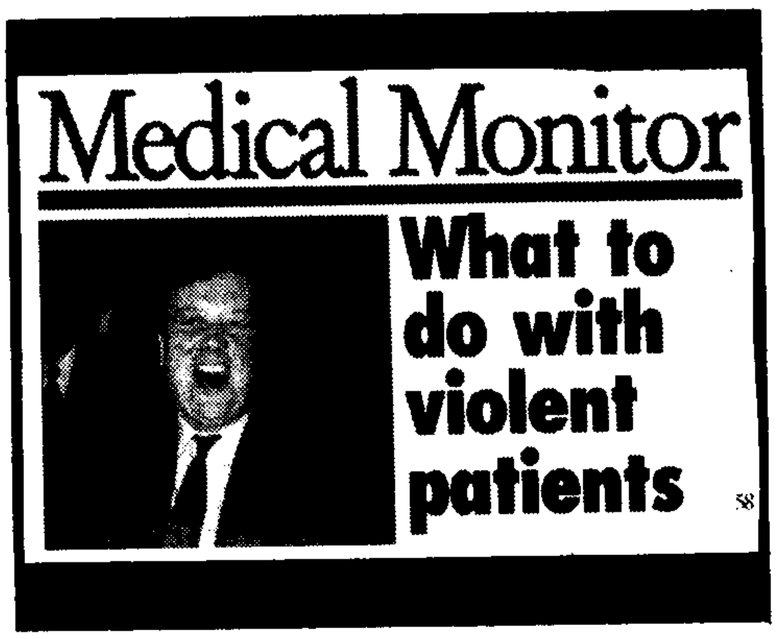
At present many terminations are done by local district general hospitals such as **Glan Clwyd** and **Wrexham Maelor** who, despite providing a consultant-led service (something BPAS doesn't), were overlooked in the bidding for the abortion service. Clwyd family planning service put in a lower bid than BPAS to provide the initial counselling and assessment locally, thus obviating the need for a visit to Chester, but this too was rejected.

The reasoning behind the BPAS contract remains unclear. The North Wales coastal region has a very high incidence of teenage pregnancy and abortion, and health officials have had difficulty meeting the government's health of the nation targets. Sending patients over the border to England may mean that they are reclassified as English, thus reducing the abortion rate in Clwyd at a stroke.

Unfortunately many such patients find it hard enough to get to the local DGH, let alone finance a trip to England, and the teenage birth rates and non-accidental injury rates may rise in the future if they decide not to travel. For those women over 20 weeks pregnant who need a termination, BPAS is offering the service at nearby Leamington Spa, just a short train journey from Llandudno Junction.

● THE recently appointed chair of the NHS's **South and West region** Janet Trotter is a former member of the Equal Opportunities Commission and holds several part-time posts. Last autumn a part-time lecturer at Cheltenham and Gloucester college of higher education won a £17,500 pre-tribunal settlement from the college over a performance-related pay scheme that discriminates against part-timers. The college principal is the ubiquitous Ms Janet Trotter.

Prior to her promotion Ms Trotter was chair of **Gloucester DHA** from 1992. She leaves it with an £850,000 debt. This debt has apparently been amassed by sending too many patients out of the county for treatment, and an inquiry is underway as



to how this could have passed unnoticed. Disciplinary action against staff at Gloucester health headquarters is being considered, and an extra cot promised for the paediatric intensive care unit at **Gloucester Royal hospital** has been cancelled. Ms Trotter appears to have escaped unscathed, and as health minister Gerald Malone said on announcing her new post: "She brings a wealth of skills and experience to the NHS."

● CRITICS of GP fundholding are waging "a modern day witch hunt couched in language of the Dark Ages" — at least according to Dr Rhidian Morris, chief preacher of the **National Association of Fundholding Practices**. A NAFP survey of 539 fundholders has found that 67 percent have provided more treatment and 83 percent have reduced waiting times. But at what cost? Fundholding is administratively very expensive and there is, as yet, no evidence that the vast sums of management money ploughed into the scheme to kick start it into "success" at the expense of non-fundholders and other health authority services has been a sensible use of resources. Meanwhile, managers at **York district general hospital** have asked consultants "to focus on GP fundholder work and deal only with urgent cases for **North Yorkshire health authority**." Loosely translated, non-urgent operations are for patients of fundholders only. That seems fair.

M.D.

Down on the Farm

The Mad Cow debate continues...

READER Andrew Simmons writes that there is "plenty of evidence" of spongiform encephalopathies "jumping" from species to species, as if this proves that mad cows caught BSE from sheep. Of course there is evidence of species jumps — for instance of scrapie to mice — but owing to an extraordinary blunder by the ministry of agriculture (aka Maffia), no UK experiments have been done to prove the sheep-cattle link.

Therefore there is no actual *evidence* of scrapie having passed from sheep to cattle; while the only worthwhile experiments so far conducted, in Ames, Iowa, have failed to replicate the disease. What the scrapie theorists need to realise is that because an infective agent can jump from one particular species to another, this does not prove that it will pass to yet another.

The remarkable fact about infective agents is that subtle differences in the sequences of amino acids, the building blocks which make up BSE and scrapie "prions", can have massive effects on the way the disease spreads. Thus, given the structural differences in sheep and cattle prion proteins, and the lack of *evidence* of sheep to cattle spread, it is preferable not to reach speculative conclusions.

ANOTHER reader, Sarah-Jane Pennant, expressed concern over the observation that BSE has been around for 100 years. She feels it might not tally with Muck's view that the disease might have been caused by organophosphorus (OP) pesticides. She need have no fears.

While BSE almost certainly has been around for some considerable time — with Muck's phone line buzzing with details from more and more farmers who recognised the condition before the 1980s — it clearly only reached detectable epidemic levels (ie enough for the Maffia to notice) in the mid 80s. The big gap in knowledge, lamentably unfilled by the Maffia, is what switched on the epidemic. Here, in part, Mark Purdey, the Taunton organic farmer (*Eyes passim*), provides an explanation. He believes that Maffia-approved nerve agents were the trigger, reinforced by feeding BSE-infected cattle back to other cows.

WHATEVER heinous crimes the Maffia has committed, however, it is not guilty of "deregulating" the rendering industry — contrary to the assertions of another correspondent, Mr J.P. Walsh FIBMS, and others. Processing animal remains has been controlled by waste food orders since the second world war, and the basic requirements were not changed.

Furthermore, many of the so called "low temperature" processes which the Maffia allowed under its fictional deregulation programme operate during parts of their cycles at higher temperatures than the conventional batch processes they replaced.

Hindsight is a wonderful thing; but the pre-BSE targets for processing were bacteria and viruses, all of which were successfully knocked out by the approved processes. No one, not even "new" Labour, could have predicted that an infective protein would emerge so resistant that it withstands the rigours of a hospital autoclave.

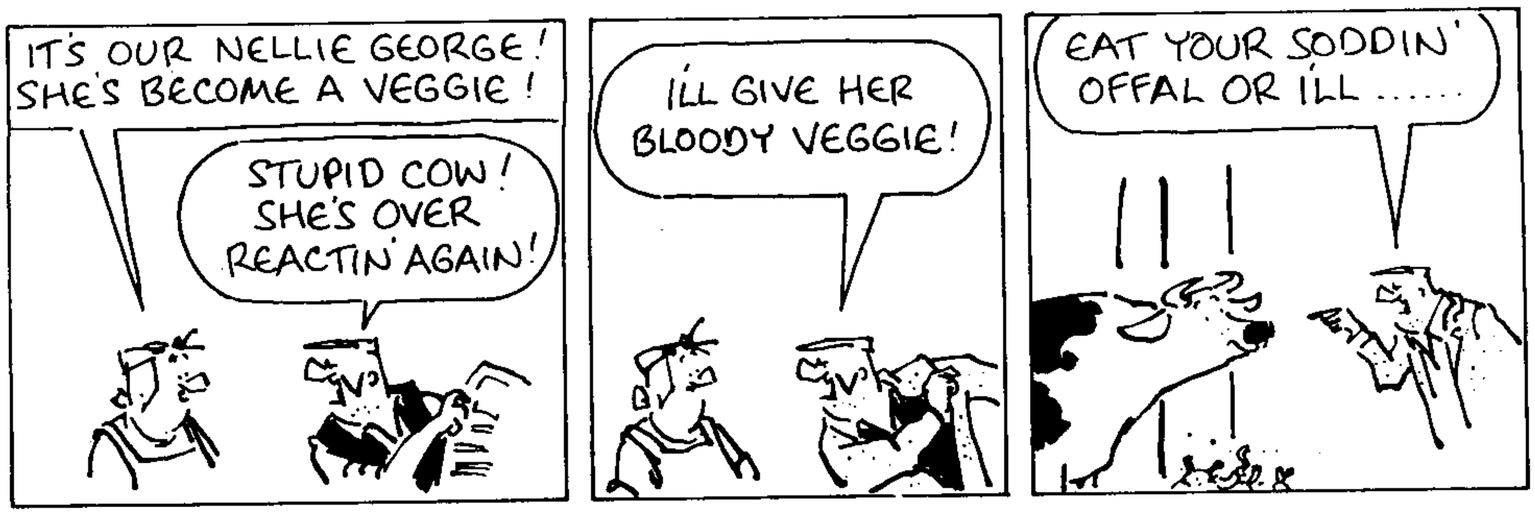
But if everyone is going to get so indignant about the renderers where is the outcry about doctors spreading CJD from sterilised surgical instruments? And Mr Walsh FIBMS cannot infer that the slow decline in the incidence of BSE after the feed ban necessarily suggests a "causal role" for processed feed. Interestingly, the decline also coincides with the scaling down of warble fly treatment, for which the Maffia had compelled the use of OPs.

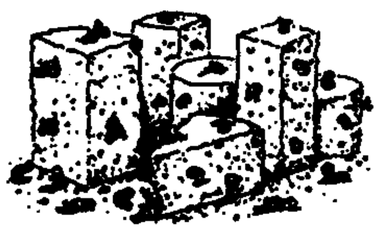
As for Torquil Norman, the last of the published *Eye* BSE correspondents, and his outrageous suggestion for dumping mad cows in Spanish fishing waters — shame on you. Why waste so much energy when, with a fraction of the effort, we could dump the entire cabinet there to the greater satisfaction and safety of all.

'New Muckspreader'

Old Macdonald

ALBERT


IT'S OUR NELLIE GEORGE! SHE'S BECOME A VEGGIE!
STUPID COW! SHE'S OVER REACTIN' AGAIN!
I'LL GIVE HER BLOODY VEGGIE!
EAT YOUR SODDIN' OFFAL OR I'LL .....



THE
Rotten Borough Advertiser
Friday, 3 May 1996

WORK-SHOPPED!

THE Birmingham Women's Workshop was one of those ventures into political correctness that was always going to cost the city's council taxpayers dearly. Just how dearly is just emerging.

The workshop was founded 11 years ago with £700,000 of public money in a rundown part of Small Heath to train women to become carpenters, electricians and computer experts. Over the years it soaked up city council grants totalling £2.5 million.

The grants stopped only when a nosy auditor discovered that few of the instructors were qualified and the centre was actually operating as, er, a lesbian contact centre.

Within hours of the decision to close the workshop, however, a group of instructors were back there with a motley collection of vans and vehicles. Shortly after their visit, the building was found to have been stripped of anything valuable — including seven top-of-the-range Apple Mac and PC desk-top publishing systems, 12 Amstrad computers, a collection of power tools and even the office furniture.

The only people to emerge with nothing were the actual students. Out of 40 who attended in its last year only five found jobs, all unrelated to their training, and the rest were told to go to a proper college. The only person to get a full time job out of it was the district auditor, whose investigation looks set to take months.

LIPA LIP

MURKEYSIDE is awash with Euro-dosh in the form of Objective One funding from the EU, and one way for the area's small group of unelected quangocrats to secure it is to stick local boy Paul McCartney's name on a project.

The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (LIPA) — aka the Paul McCartney *Fame* School — which opened in January is receiving £7.8 million of public money in its first year. Most either came from Objective One or from Liverpool City Challenge, a government urban aid agency. The problem is that the money is intended to tackle poverty by improving the local economy and giving jobs and training to locals. Yet the locals seem to be the last ones to benefit.

The *Fame* school borders the Granby area of Toxteth, the poorest ward on Merseyside. None of LIPA's senior management or full-time teachers originates from the area. In addition, only two out of LIPA's 242 full-time students are black. Local black musicians are particularly galled: the school was first suggested to McCartney by local musician Ade Ogunboro after the Toxteth riots as a way to help local youth. The remark "We are elitist", made recently by LIPA chief executive Mark Featherstone-Witty, did not help.

LIPA's prospectus says it welcomes applications "from all sections of the community." Applications maybe, but *places* are another matter. Very few scousers, black or white, go there. LIPA students are more likely to come from Germany or Gary, Indiana, than Garston or Granby.

Liverpool City Challenge is now embarrassed that its substantial financial support is being challenged. LCC director John Flamson said he'd be monitoring LIPA "very closely on its performance regarding access for local students and local recruitment". Will this monitoring be as vigorous as that applied by LCC to the Liverpool Black Music Association? It has been asking for a £25,000 start-up grant for more than a year — but still has to make do with the £15.80 in its bank account.

JUNKET OF THE WEEK

JUST days into the local authority changeover, "new" Labour in North Lanarkshire proved old habits die hard: it approved a "twinning" visit for 14 councillors to the scenic German town of Schweinefurt — despite SNP claims that the new authority "had no powers of approval for such a visit".

The people of Schweinefurt provided the quality accommodation and entertainment, while the visiting council paid the substantial travelling costs. North Lanarkshire taxpayers will be glad to learn that their hard-working ambassadors also qualified for an average £65-a-day allowance during their jolly.

BENT DOUBLE

ALL change in Bent, where the Conservatives, who until now had 33 councillors, as did Labour and the Liberal Democrats combined, had kept control of the borough with the casting vote of Tory mayor Gwen Tookey.

That was until 19 April, however, when Tory councillor Alan Kemp died. Anxious to stay in power, the Conservatives decided not to tell anyone about Mr Kemp's death. Not that they intended to prop him up on the council benches; they just didn't want Labour or the Lib Dems to be able to prepare for government.

Their plan was spoilt when news of the death was leaked to the press. Opposition parties then began desperately rounding up *all* their members for the then forthcoming 22 April meeting, with Ken Livingstone, the MP for Bent East, telephoning Lib Dem local government spokesman David Rendel and offering to pay Liberal councillor John Ratray's flight back from Ireland.

It all worked out well for the opposition. When the Tories knew they were outnumbered – by one vote – they tried to suspend the 22 April meeting. (The official line was that it was "as a mark of respect for the deceased Kemp"). When this failed they walked out and a Lab-Lib coalition took over. The new regime will now appoint a Labour or Liberal mayor at the forthcoming AGM, and so even if the Tories win the 30 May by-election in Mr Kemp's ward, they will still be manoeuvred for the next year on the casting vote of the new mayor, who certainly won't be a Tory.

● More bad news concerning Bent's Irish centre, which received a council grant of £137,000 just before the 1994 elections — to the consternation of the district auditor who has been investigating ever since (the centre urged Irish voters in Cricklewood, 40 per cent of the electorate, to vote Tory and the Tories duly won the seat!)

The council's own internal special investigations unit has uncovered worrying inconsistencies in the centre's building expenditure: "Eleven invoices with a total value of £14,080.59, included in BICCA's [Brent Irish Cultural and Community Association] expenditure records have found to be forgeries." And another report found evidence of forgeries worth more than £9,000. These are now under police investigation.

IN BRIEF

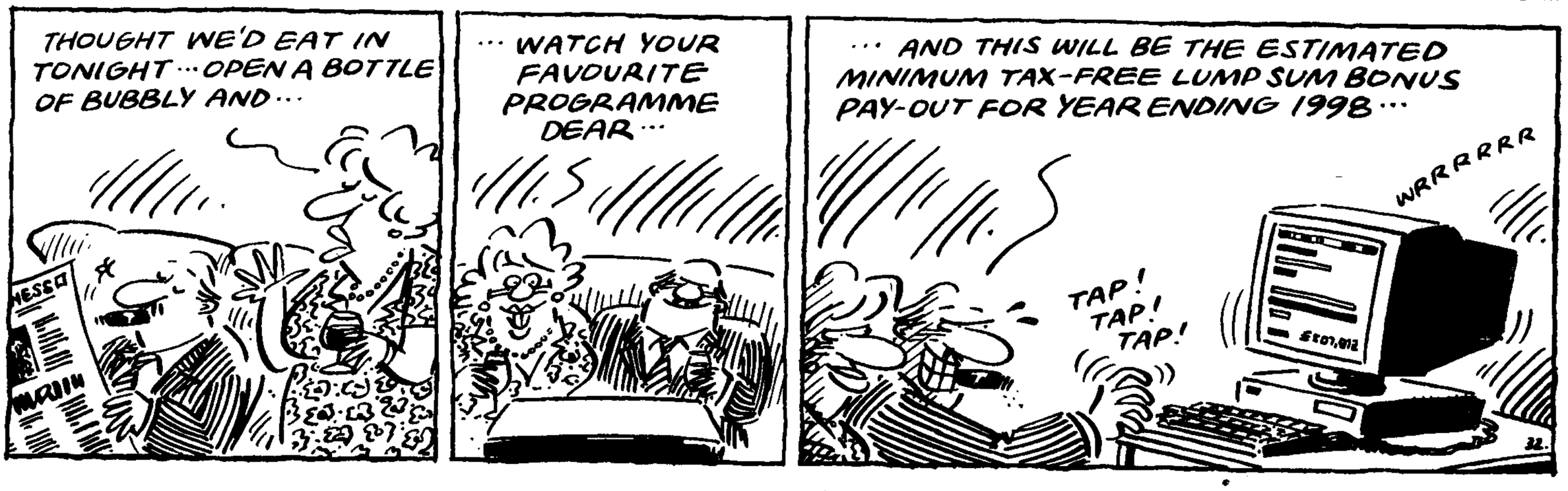
WESTMINSTER: £453,000 from the sale of commercial property has gone missing from the housing revenue account. It has disappeared gradually over the last two years and was only discovered when two law firms, Shindler's, who did the conveyancing for the council, and Finer's, merged and examined some old documents. Hilary Stone, a former senior partner at Swindler's, has quit and faces a solicitor's disciplinary tribunal. She has agreed not to practise and Knacker wants a word.

RENFREWSHIRE: The new Labour-run council has appointed Richard Manser vice-convenor of the education committee, to preside over the region's deep religious divide between non-denominational and Catholic schools. But in 1984 he was expelled from the Labour group for six months for asserting that "religion is an anachronism no longer relevant to modern life". Manser swears he has undergone a conversion, but Labour has other problems: Coun Paul Mack, expelled over his conviction for assault several years ago. It has escaped the group memory that Manser has convictions for assaulting two different women in 1988 and 1989.

CAMDEN: When former Irish republican Steve Bundred became chief executive, Sinn Fein applied to set up a new UK HQ in his borough. The bid was only ever designed to embarrass the former Troops Out supporter. Bundred, still head of finance, is an old school Labourite and ex-member of Red Ken's GLC politburo. He has shown continued empathy for the working class by arranging to sack 3,000 of them — including his deputy, Colin Carmichael, who lost the race to the chief executive's chair by one vote. Carmichael also made the mistake of failing to guide members when they considered appointing Mrs Steve Bundred as assistant director of social services. Now he has been ousted he wants a fatcat-style £500,000 golden goodbye. One Camden worker whose job is safe is Dennis Skinner, son of the Beast of Bolsover and one of three assistant chief executives — i.e. a full-time chauffeur for the chief exec.

DIRECTORS WIVES

DREDGE


THOUGHT WE'D EAT IN TONIGHT ··· OPEN A BOTTLE OF BUBBLY AND ···
··· WATCH YOUR FAVOURITE PROGRAMME DEAR ···
··· AND THIS WILL BE THE ESTIMATED MINIMUM TAX-FREE LUMP SUM BONUS PAY-OUT FOR YEAR ENDING 1998 ···
WRRRRRR
TAP! TAP! TAP!

SIGNAL FAILURES

THE privatisation of Railtrack is giving anoraks a new hobby: trainwreck spotting.

One *Eye* reader spied the wreckage of no fewer than four trains on a recent journey from Reading to Stafford (which was diverted because of another derailment). Most of the derailments were caused by poor track maintenance by Railtrack, which has skimped on the costs of maintaining railways to amass the £70 million "profit" it will give new shareholders.

In a typical week in late March drivers on the West Coast route, Britain's busiest mainline, were instructed to slow to 30mph or 20mph in 16 places between London Euston and Crewe because of track, embankments or bridges in sub-standard condition. Railtrack had been forced by the health and safety executive (HSE) to carry out remedial work near Euston but broke the rules by not erecting warning signs beside the track. There were 43 speed restrictions between Euston and Crewe: BR used to permit no more than two at a time.

FACT: When the West Coast line was handed over by BR to Railtrack in 1994 there was not one speed restriction on the entire route from Euston to Glasgow.

COACH operator National Express got a bonus when it won the Gatwick Express and Midland mainline franchises.

All franchise holders automatically receive full information about railcards. National Express coaches compete with InterCity and Alphaline trains and are successful in the cut-price market, which includes railcard holders. National Express runs its own coachcard and his hitherto been unable to lay its hands on sensitive information about railcards.

Now National Express will get the full mailing list of past and present railcard holders (more than two million people) and prior notice of all railcard marketing campaigns and promotions — information which could help National Express promote its coaches and take custom from other rail operators.

THE government is guaranteeing that rail franchise holders will not face new competition from other train operators for the first three years — yet it is encouraging franchise holders to undermine other rail services by providing connecting buses.

In Hampshire, Stagecoach, operator of South West Trains, is running a connecting bus which competes with South Wales and West Railway. More disturbing is the intention of Sea Containers, the anti-Communist operator of the London to Edinburgh InterCity franchise, to lay on bus connections between Lincoln and its express trains at Newark. Lincoln has lost its direct InterCity services and the competing bus service could be the final nail in the coffin of its last rail link with the mainline.

The fact that buses are less comfortable and safe than trains, contribute to road congestion and are inaccessible to disabled people and cyclists is irrelevant. The scope for franchises to undermine vulnerable rail routes with their own buses will be enormous, especially as the franchising director, far from prohibiting such competition, is promoting it.

'Dr B. Ching'

EDUCATION NEWS

BORED bureaucrats at the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), which distributes funds to universities and colleges, have decided to spice their life up a bit.

They have latched on to the government passion for inspection, and over the last few years have been sending "teams" out to assess every course in the country.

The six-man teams go on week-long visits, requiring team members to stay in three- and four-star hotels. Each visit costs the taxpayer around £8,000, and over the next seven years thousands more HEFCE visits will be needed to assess the courses not yet validated.

POLICE 5

AS A sensitive headline on the front page of the *Daily Mail* put it on 27 April: £60,000 FOR EACH STITCH.

The story was about Daniel Goswell, who had been awarded £302,000 compensation for being handcuffed and truncheoned over the head by a Metropolitan policeman. The *Mail* went on to quote the chairman of the Police Federation saying this was "an outrageous waste of public money", and wheeled on a suitably outraged rent-a-quote from Lady Olga Maitland MP.

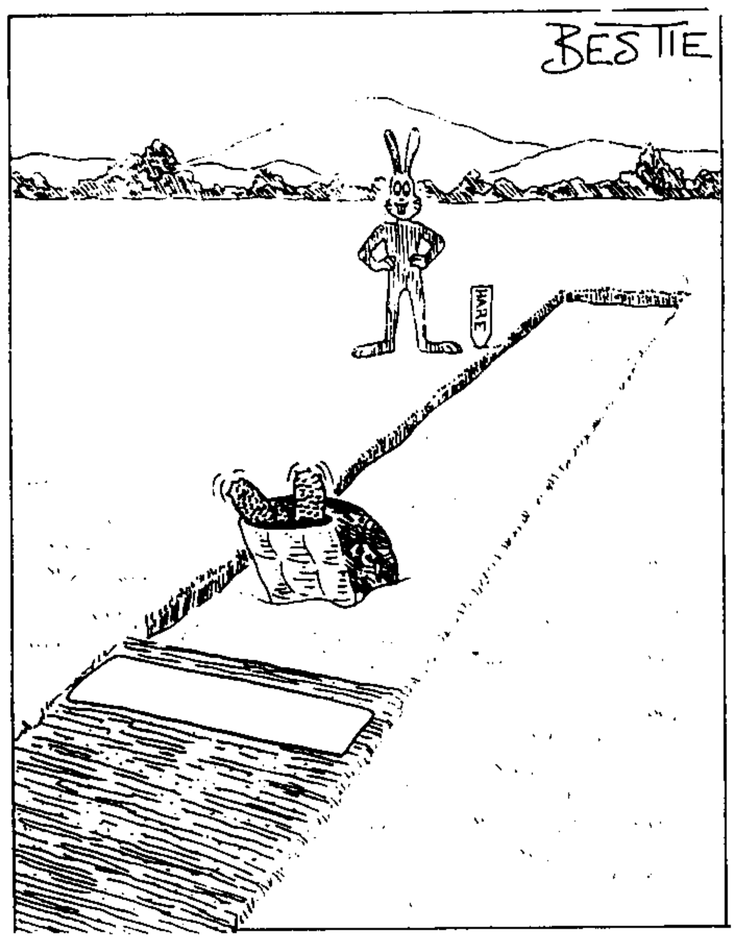
The chief reason for the high award was the "exemplary damages" for the "arbitrary and oppressive" behaviour of the police. This may have resulted from the performance in court of Goswell's assailant, PC Rhys Trigg of Bromley, who told the jury that he would do the same again.

Part of the award, however, may have referred to the failure of the police to arrest or prosecute PC Trigg for the assault, even after his version of the events (that he did not handcuff Goswell before he hit him) had been rejected not only in the courts but also by the Metropolitan commissioner.

In January 1993 Trigg's appeal against his sacking from the police was rejected by the then commissioner, Sir Peter Imbert, whose deputy, he wrote, had investigated the facts and "concluded that the handcuffs had been placed on the prisoner prior to the truncheon being used".

The jury may have concluded that if any of them had handcuffed and wounded an innocent citizen and then told an inaccurate story about it in court, they might have been prosecuted. PC Trigg wasn't prosecuted for assault, GBH, perjury or anything else. Indeed, on appeal to home secretary Michael Howard he got his job back, presumably on the grounds that Howard wants more policemen on the beat who handcuff and truncheon anyone who argues with them.

PS: No prosecution or disciplinary action was started against any of three police officers who backed Trigg's story in court: PCs James Wright, Timothy Kent and Tania Cooper.



Tortoise's luck ran out in the next event

NUCLEAR UPDATE

MORE on Britain's nuclear deterrent and Plymouth's Devonport dockyard: the latter is to be sold to DML, the private consortium that has been managing the site.

The dockyard will be upgraded to refit Trident nuclear submarines for the ministry of defence. But the cost of the refits will be almost £100 million more than the amount quoted by DML in its contract to manage the yard, which it won after narrowly beating rival Scottish yard Rosyth (*Eye* 887).

As DML was the only interested party, the MoD was obliged to meet its demands for extra money for the management contract or be left with no buyer. Brown and Root, the American partner in the consortium, has been given a controlling share of the dockyard because of its civil contracting experience. Its input into the refitting of Britain's nuclear subs will therefore be vital.

CND has produced a special report on the company and says Brown and Root's involvement does not augur well. The report reveals that Brown and Root was the subject of the biggest lawsuit in American history after errors were made in building a nuclear power plant. These included a "near total failure" to perform acceptable welding on a major water system to cool the plant in an emergency.

The US Atomic Safety and Licensing Board has also criticised Brown and Root's safety standards; and more than 2,000 former employees have filed personal lawsuits against the firm because of poor health and safety standards. Good to see the government has done its homework on the company refurbishing Britain's nuclear submarines...

LOTTERY WINNERS

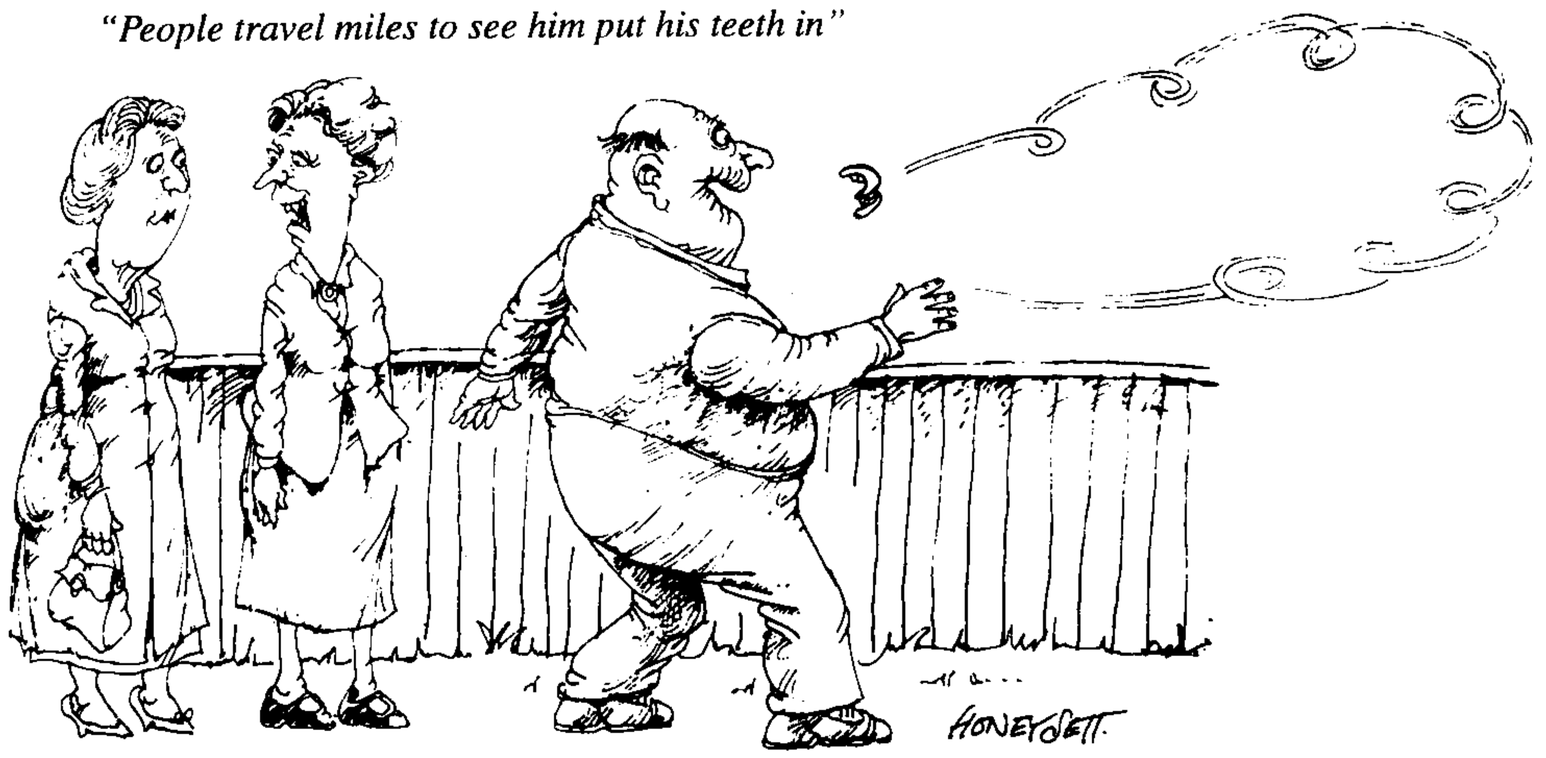
THE generosity of the national heritage memorial fund knows few bounds. Not content with handing £12.5 million to the patriotic Churchill family to keep Sir Winston's papers in Britain, it has spread its largesse to its disgraced former director.

Georgina Nayler, who was also the accounting officer, was forced to quit last summer after revelations that the fund had awarded computer contracts worth £36,000 to her boyfriend Simon Stillwell. Everyone presumed her departure marked an end of the matter, but persistent questioning by the Commons public accounts committee (PAC) has revealed that the fund has since approved a secret pay-off to Nayler of £30,000.

That is of course £30,000 that could have gone to good causes. But the sum, it has emerged, is a mere bagatelle compared to the rest of the money consumed by the army of bureaucrats employed by the five national quangos and their numerous regional subsidiaries.

Until recently that figure was also a secret, but careful questioning by Labour MP Angela Eagle has at last brought forward the reluctant admission by the government that the five national quangos alone cost £30 million a year. Charities of Britain: eat your hearts out.

"People travel miles to see him put his teeth in"



Letters

Class dismissed

Sir,

If John Prescott is middle class, I'd rather be something else — "Business" Class?

Yours faithfully,
ERIC HODGES,
Maidenhead, Berks.

Sir,

On the cover of EYE *896 you feature John Prescott saying the word "booger". As this word is unknown in the north of England I assume that it's your usual home counties mocking of those of us who live north of Watford, and that the word in question is actually "bugger". This word is in popular usage up here, it's just that you daft ha'p'orths "dahn sarf" mispronounce it as "baggah".*

Yours,
GEOFFREY JOHNSON,
Liverpool.

Sir,

Notwithstanding your front-cover jibe at "new" Labour, and constant sniping remarks about Tony Blair and Peter Mandelson, my life has been transformed by their commitment to building a more caring Britain, freed from the shackles of commercialism and greed. As a result I have decided to give up my well-paid but socially unjustifiable job as a computer consultant, and become a nomadic hunter-gatherer. Any advice your readers can offer on career prospects, techniques for increasing productivity and improving competitiveness in this ancient lifestyle would be much appreciated. I would also be interested if anyone could locate a copy of HUNTING WITHOUT CRUELTY *by Jane R. Party.*

Yours faithfully,
GARETH JONES.
via email

Sea frontal attack

Sir,

*Curious how age dulls a building's offensiveness. Had it been new, Piloti would have raged against the Worthing Dome (*EYE *895). Look at how the tower relates not at all to the building from which it emerges. Look at how the roof of the latter violently slices across one of the tower windows. Look at the discrepancy of scale between the two. But no! Such glaring deficiencies are overlooked — after all, the eyesore is an old one and critical faculties must be temporarily suspended.*

Yours faithfully,
COLIN DEANE,
London W1.

More in sorrow

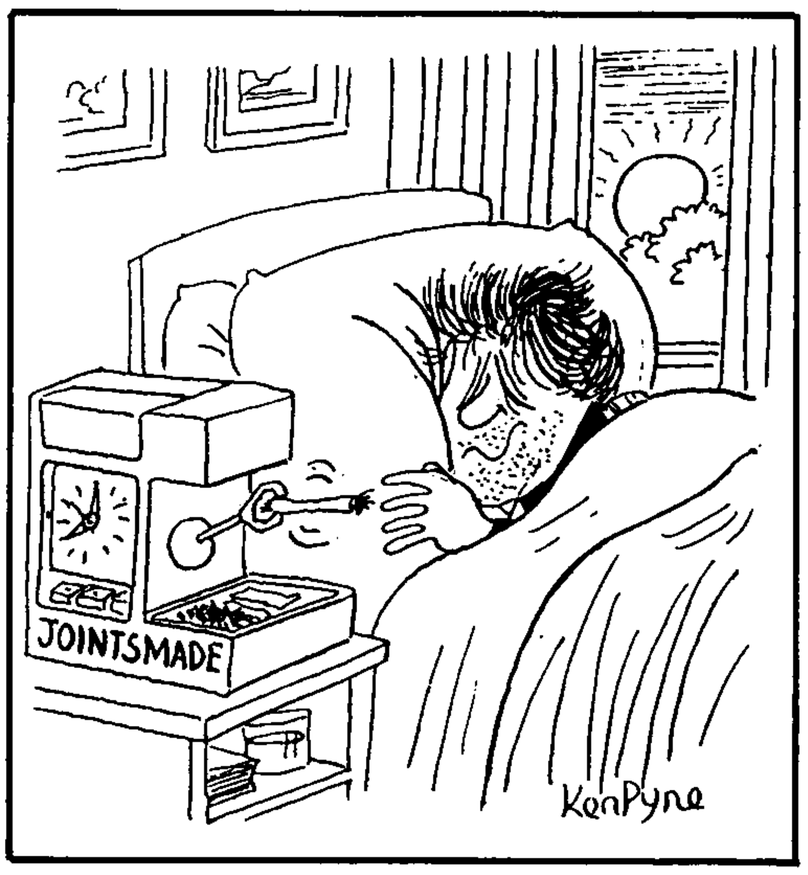
Sir,

I have been extremely saddened by the approach taken by PRIVATE EYE *to the tragedy in Dunblane. The articles in 894 were mistaken but perhaps understandable; but residents and parents in Dunblane and I suspect elsewhere in Britain, scarcely needed* PRIVATE EYE *to point out the hypocrisy and insensitivity of the tabloid media.*

I found the references to Dunblane in the last Square Eyes article extremely offensive. Given the nature of the event the mocking description of the film FIELD OF DREAMS *with its "ghostly reunion of parents and children" was outrageous and utterly deplorable. Again you have used the tragedy here to support your own attacks on the media without any thought for those involved.*

As pointed out in the letter of the last edition you are no better than the tabloids, cashing in on this horrific event to suit your own needs. Did you not think you had readers in Dunblane? I believe an apology of some sort to the families involved is definitely in order.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW KELLY,
Dunblane.



Taffs on seats

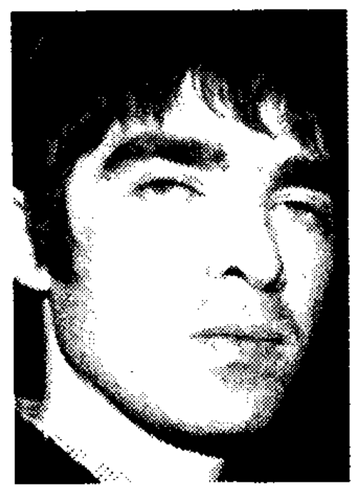
Sir,

Arts News (896) states that in Cardiff, "Welsh National Opera only ever attracts an audience of 800". In fact the New Theatre has over a thousand seats, which often sell out weeks in advance for WNO productions. Even unfamiliar operas like THE RAKE'S PROGRESS *play to packed houses. So the proposal to build a 1,750-seat opera house is by no means a "madcap scheme".*

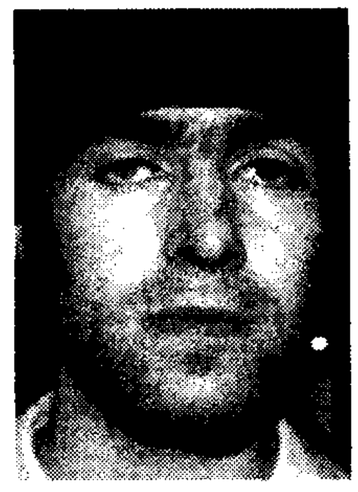
Also, you don't have to be a rich Tory to enjoy opera in Cardiff. Ticket prices start at £8.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT HARRIES,
Aberdare, Mid Glamorgan.

Sibling rivalry



Lennon



McCartney

Sir,

In your photograph of Noel Gallagher (896, page 24) he bears an unbelievably striking resemblance to his brother, Liam. Are they by any chance related? I think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
GEOFF WALSH,
Kettering, Northants.

(PS. Shurely shome mishtake?)

Ministering angel

Sir,

In last week's Colour Section you reported that I held a non-executive directorship of a subsidiary of Dalgety plc while in charge of Livestock Group in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. You said that this "illustrated the close cooperation between MAFF and the animal feed industry". May I point out:

1 *The appointment was part of a government initiative across several departments aimed at improving civil servants' understanding of business, and vice versa;*

2 *it was unpaid;*

3 *and well known in the trade, being listed in my entry in* WHO'S WHO;

4 *the subsidiary dealt not in animal feed but in food ingredients such as flour, rusk, flavourings etc, and so had no commercial involvement in any subject which I covered in MAFF.*

Both I and Dalgety took great care to avoid any conflict of interest with my work in MAFF. I kept the two activities strictly separate and did not discuss the department's business with the company, or vice versa.

Yours sincerely,
GEOFFREY HOLLIS,
Hatfield, Herts.

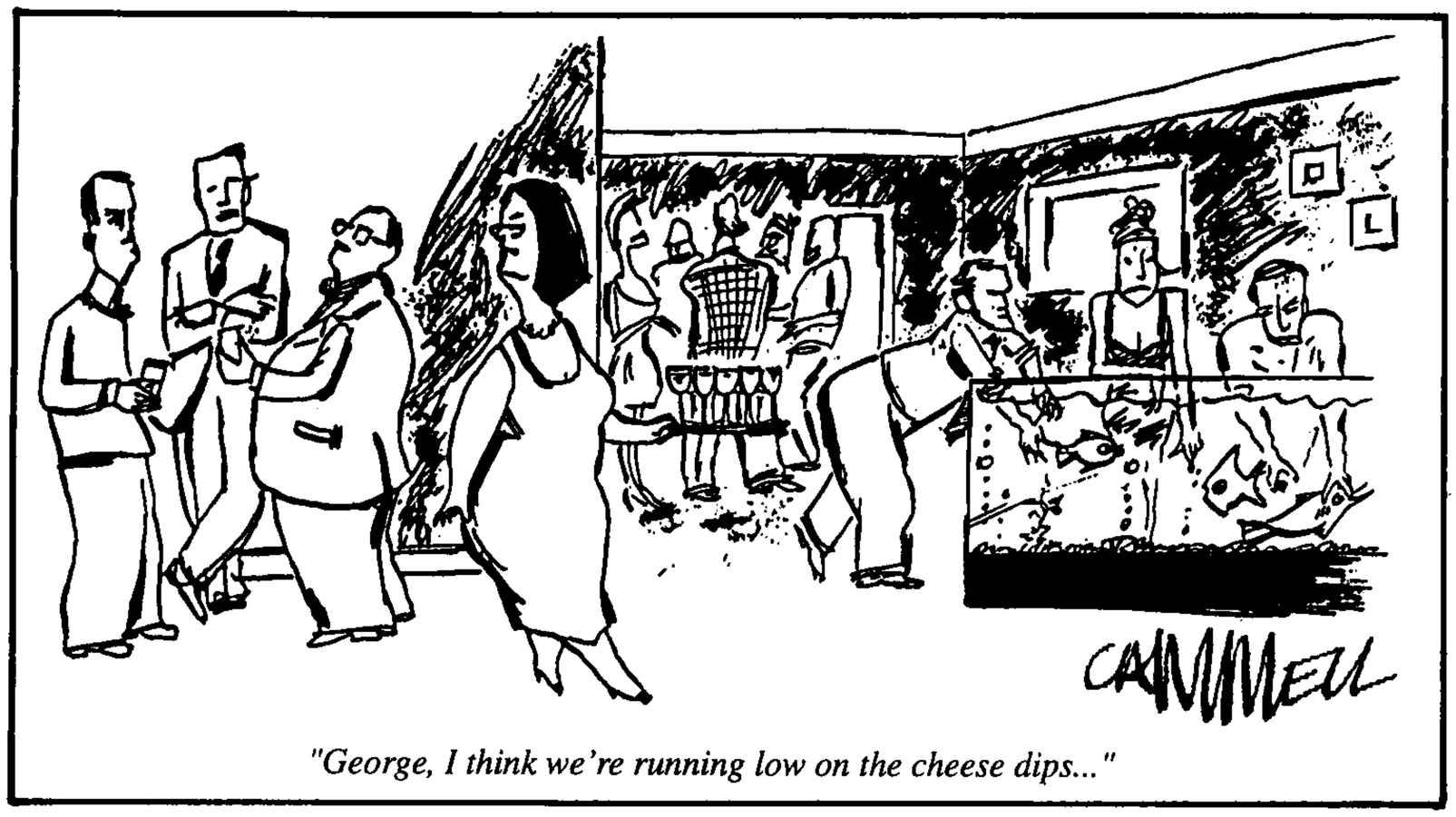
Power of Tower

Sir,

As far as the £4.3 million money missing from the former Globe Town Neighbourhood is concerned, Councillor Janet Ludlow is at best mistaken to say that it was left to her to write to the chief executive about the matter. I had raised the subject two months before Cllr Ludlow's face-saving but meaningless gesture. It is yet another illustration of the inadequate safeguards for the public's money which the Liberals had in place during their ill-fated experiment in decentralising our borough.

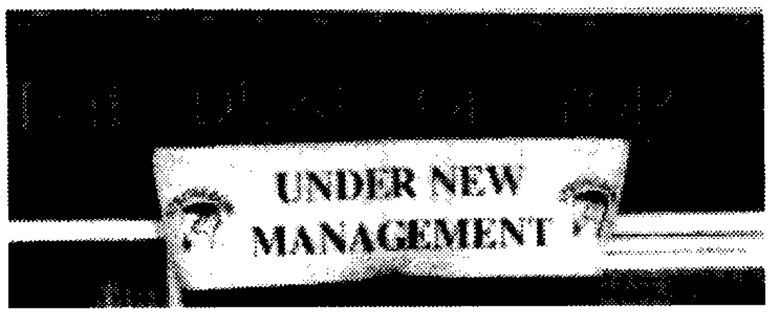
As for your more recent story on the market scandal, the report of the district auditor makes clear once and for all that the Liberals have been found out. The longer they squirmed and prevaricated the more they were damned in the eyes of the public. The fact that they appointed one of the chief culprits mayor of the borough illustrates their contempt for the Hendy report, which they had themselves commissioned, and for the public at large.

Yours faithfully,
CLLR PHIL MAXWELL,
Chair, Housing Services Committee, Tower Hamlets.



"George, I think we're running low on the cheese dips..."

I-Spy *London N1*



Submitted by Anon. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Square Eye spies

Sir,

I must take issue with Square Eyes over his criticism of the showing of ancient films during the Easter period.

"For the first time in years a bank holiday passed without a James Bond movie on ITV," he sneered, inaccurately as it happens.

We in Tyne-Tees region not only had a Bond film on bank holiday Monday, but it was DR NO, *the oldest one of all.*

See, some Easter traditions are still sacred.

Yours sincerely,
TONY GILLAN,
High Barnes, Sunderland.

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypso

Group practice

Sir,

It is perhaps not surprising that our conclusions about childhood leukaemia near Sellafield should be rubbished by those (eg Backbiter, EYE *895) whose prejudices appear to prevent them from studying our detailed and exhaustive report. While population mixing ("sewage and a mystery virus") may have played some part we specifically state that we are not convinced that it can explain the excess which has persisted over more than three decades.*

Be that as it may there is no excuse for dubbing us "government radiation scientists". We are not. As doctors and scientists from universities, hospitals, research units and cancer charities, we are fiercely protective of our independence.

Yours faithfully,
BRYN BRIDGES,
Chairman, Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation and the Environment (COMARE), University of Sussex.

Oar inspiring

Sir,

Re: "Those Boat Race Crews In Full" (895): So, whereas Cambridge are mercenary bastards importing a crew of professional American oarsmen, those Oxford chaps are all jolly sporting fairplay Brits remaining true to the amateur ideal. Er, actually, no. If the author of your piece had bothered to read the crew lists, he would have discovered that Oxford had five imported Americans, and Cambridge had, er, one. Please by all means satirize the Varsities' practice of crew selection, but at least be fair about it.

C.P. DIXON,
Vice-Captain, Cantabrigian Rowing Club, Cambridge.

Idle sod

Sir,

Re Hackwatch (A Load of Bull, EYE *895). The information about our Tory MP was just that. He does not farm 1,000 acres in the Cotswolds; at one time it was a sizeable arable farm of some 300 acres but he sold that off... to the next door European company and possibly invested the lump sum in the doubtful insurance market. He sits on or in 30 acres of land nowadays, called a smallholding in this county.*

Yours faithfully,
NETRAB RENNEV,
Lydney, Glos.

Roedean School Charity (no. 307063) exists to provide quality educaiton for girls.

Advertisement in Kent Life

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"We deserved to win this game after hammering them 0-0 in the first half."
KEVIN KNEEGAN, Newcastle Journal
(Noel Turnball)

"I've had 38 fights, lost one and was never put on my feet."
GARY MASON, Radio 5 Live
(Mrs A.C. Hobbs)

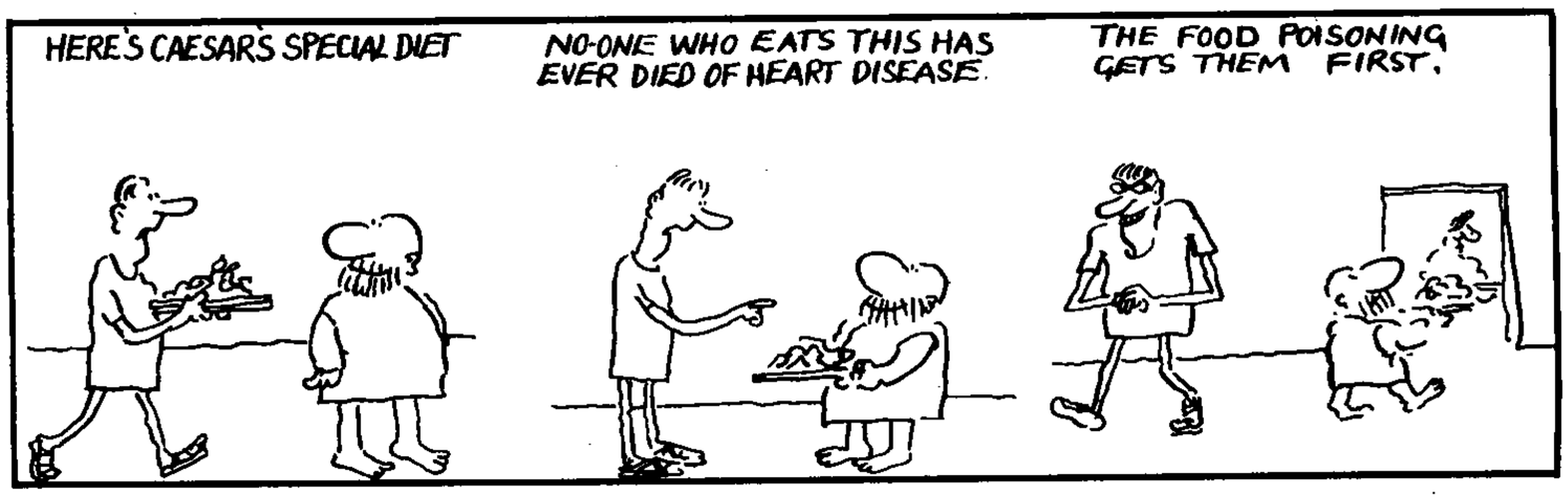
"If you won't tell me who told you that, it's not worth the paper it's written on."
MALCOLM RIFKIND, BBC2
(Roy Russell)

"We have self-belief in each other."
GAVIN HASTINGS, BBC1
(David Smalley)

Clive Warren: *How many hours a week do you work?*
Caller: *About 80.*
Clive Warren: *That's 80 hours a week, then?*
Caller: *Yes.*
Radio 1
(B. McCormack)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN



Letter from **Hezbollah**

from Our Own Correspondent

WHILE Shimon Peres, the Israeli prime minister, thanks his lucky stars he has temporarily extricated himself from the fallout of Operation Grapes of Wrath, the senseless killing seems to have had unexpected effects on Lebanon's fragmented politics.

For the first time since the civil war, Lebanon has faced the national crisis as a nation and not as a series of armed camps. Hezbollah, previously floundering in the political wilderness as a dangerous and alien thorn in Lebanon's side, has been dignified, albeit temporarily, with the status of national resistance movement.

For Peres, playing God in Lebanon is not the same walkover it was at the time of the Israeli invasion in 1982 or the last major operation against Hezbollah in 1992. Then there was no shortage of radical Christian apologists ready to ally with or support Israel to rid Lebanon of the PLO or Hezbollah. This time the whole country has identified with the agony of the people of the south — not as Shia muslims, but as fellow Lebanese. The new-found solidarity may, paradoxically, signal the Lebanese state's coming of age.

That said, Peres has proved that billionaire prime minister Rafic Hariri, a Sunni Muslim, *is* powerless to assert the government's sovereignty by stopping Hezbollah as long as Israel continues to occupy 11 percent of Lebanese territory. Sending the Lebanese army, reformed out of various militias in 1991, against Hezbollah is a political impossibility as long as many Lebanese, especially Muslims, support their struggle to free the south from Israeli occupation. Also, the power to cut off Hezbollah's supply lines is still in the gift of Syria's President Assad; and despite the ceasefire this remains the main bargaining chip in any deal Assad cuts with Israel over the occupation of the Golan Heights. With 40,000 Syrian troops stationed in Lebanon, Hariri isn't about to mess with Syria.

If Israel has learnt anything, it is to be hoped that Peres has realised that pressuring the Lebanese government is futile. Hariri is no fan of Hezbollah; all he really wants is to be allowed to kill two birds with one stone by ending the occupation of south Lebanon and consolidating his authority by stamping out Hezbollah.

One thing Grapes of Wrath has also shown beyond doubt is that Hezbollah cannot be eradicated by airstrikes and random artillery bombardment. It is far too wide and deeply entrenched in south Lebanese society to be scattered by 16 days of shelling. The 24,000 shells and 600 air raids succeeded, even by Israel's own estimate, in killing just 30 Hezbollah fighters. They failed to prevent Hezbollah from launching more than 1,000 Katyushas, and they did not damage the Party of God's organisation, popular support or military infrastructure one iota.

Hezbollah activists don't spend their time living in bunkers plotting the murder of Jews: many are part-time volunteers like Ibrahim Mousawi (a cousin of the Islamic Jihad kidnapper, Abbas Mousawi, assassinated by Mossad), the Beirut press secretary, who was a part-time teacher who joined Hezbollah after being rejected by Sheffield University; or "Jihad", a part-time fighter who runs a car repair shop in Nabatich in between firing the Katyushas.

Militarily, Israel's claim that it was shelling only "known Hezbollah positions" is absurd to anyone who has seen Hezbollah operate. Last month it organised a press trip to the frontline near the Jezzine checkpoint to watch a strike against an Israeli position. The boys with green headbands set up their Katyushas, aimed them, set the automatic timers and were over the hills and far away before the rockets even launched.

Officially Hezbollah is committed to the eradication of the state of Israel. But it is as a resistance movement that it draws much grassroots support — support that would fade if Israel ended its occupation.

Peres has managed to fulfil the wet dream of the Iranian mullah's who support Hezbollah: a massive escalation of a conflict that was close to fizzling out and leaving Iran's Islamic revolution in the cold; worldwide condemnation of Israel; and new public support for Hezbollah. Grapes of Wrath may win Peres the election, but with Hezbollah's strengthened popularity it looks like Iran will have the last laugh.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

July 25, 1993. 7.00am: Cleaned out the tub and scraped my feet with my fingernails to remove layers of dead skin. 7.05: Passed a large, firm stool, and a pint of urine. Used 5 sheets of paper. 7.10: Shaved for the third time with a Gillette Atra II blade and threw it away."

Robert Shields, a former minister and English teacher, was reading extracts from his (currently) forty-million-word diary to a small audience in Dayton, Washington State. During the introduction to his readings, he explained his working practices. "It was 1972 when I

record the rest of my life in five-minute increments. Since then I've kept details of every expense, every trip, every conversation, every mail delivery, every bowel movement, every sexual occurrence, everything. I'm completely uninhibited. I've found dozens of ways to describe urination and the smell of different sorts of body gas. Taped to the pages are fingernails, bits of dead skin, nose hairs complete with residue, grocery receipts, meat labels, anything that comes to hand. I spend about eight hours a day making notes, and another two hours typing them up on three IBM memory typewriters. I don't have much time for anything else, so a lot of the diary is filled with stuff about me writing the diary."

Throughout the performance, Shields stopped speaking every five minutes in order to make further notes. Asked why he did it, he replied: "This is my bid for immortality. I thought of becoming a serial killer. Surely this is a better course?" *(Eastern Express 18/4/96. Spotter — George H. Adams)*

—o—

"Until a month ago, Heidi Pork Tenderloin was Oink-Oink Inc's best-selling product," said R. Miles Handy, president of the Detroit corporation. "They're made from the penises of male hogs, and dogs love 'em. I got the idea of making pig penises into pet treats around the time of the Lorena Bobbitt trial. We were already using pig ears, hoofs, snouts, hearts, feet and liver. So why not the pizzles? Then it really would be everything but the squeak.

"Things went fine until last month, when an inspector from the agriculture department told us we'd have to dye them green, 'denaturing' them to show they're not fit for human consumption. But most dogs won't eat 'em if they're green, so we've stopped making them. We're losing $100,000 a month in sales, and dog owners are going crazy because we're out of this product.

"My Congressman, Rep. Joe Knollenberg, is trying to get this whole green penis issue overturned. It's ridiculous. Like all Oinkers' products, Heidi Pork Tenderloin is clean and wholesome. You could feed it to your kids. At this rate, I'm gonna have to start importing foreign pig pizzles, just to meet demand. And who wants a foreign pig penis in their mouths? Don't answer that." *(The Detroit Herald, 28/2/96. Spotter — J. Clement Jones)*

—o—

"Going to the toilet on people and taking your pants off and showing your bumhole to ministers is perfectly acceptable behaviour," Maori chief King Taurua told the Council of Elders. "Our protestors were only repeating the example of their ancestors, and anyone who apologised for the incident is a government lackey."

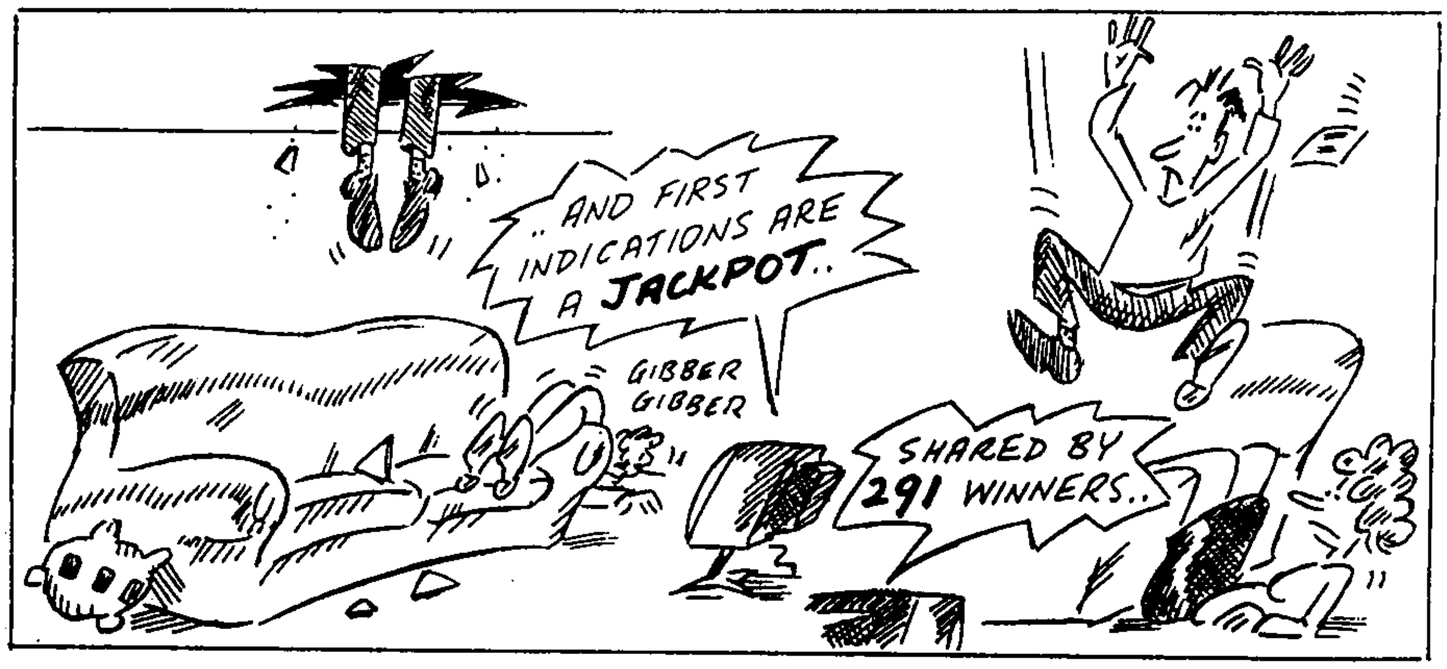
King Taurua was speaking after Maori protestors had flung human ordure and mooned at Governor-General Dame Catherine Tizard and Prime Minister Jim Bolger at last year's National Day celebrations. "These officials were on our marae *(meeting ground) and within our* whanau *(family). Things could have been much worse. Another traditional form of protest is to smash testicles with two bricks and stick out our tongues which have wooden pegs on the end. We were just having fun."* (New Straits Times, 13/4/96. Spotter — Stuart Grant)

Compiled by

Victor Lewis-Smith

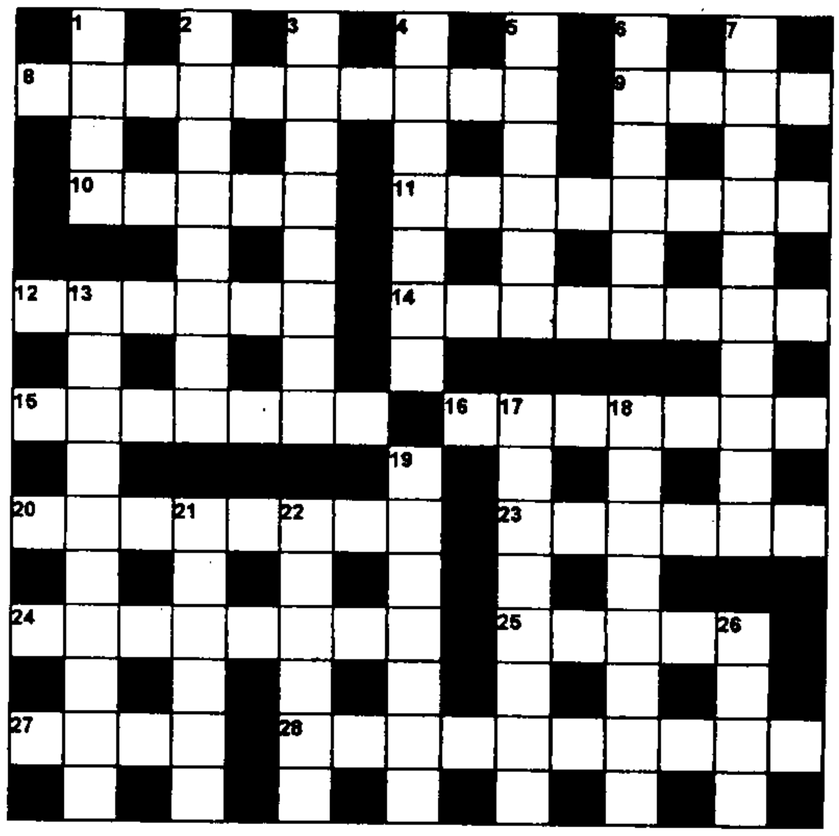
The Lottery Winners

TURNER



EYE CROSSWORD 52

by Cyclops *£100 prize*



ACROSS

8/27/17 Like top civil servants sparing us the uncomfortable details? (10,4,3,5)
9 More than one rogue is holding Major back (4)
10 Somewhat blue appearance of a leading socialist? (5)
11 Ivory linked to this trafficker? (8)
12 Makes a balls-up by including 'eff-off' in talk (6)
14 In circumstances, Tory hides old family member (8)
15 Sex appeal surrounding politician on left with a new injection of hormones? (7)
16 Bill's a solid figure constraining Tory leader (7)
20 Tits such as the likes of Black Rod (8)
23 Our monarch no longer has one — it's provided by parliamentarian in a republic (6)
24 Meeting of politicians gives you erection (8)
25 What Brenda does, left to penetrate foreign ways (5)
27 (see 8)
28 Santer involved in right-on backing for Eurotrain in its early days? (3-7)

DOWN

1 Some crusty old clot in Major's cabinet (4)
2 As may be seen by all, new Labour's started to be associated with pisspoor criminal (8)
3 Politician knight up on charge outside gets put away (8)
4 Dirty film — a seventies thing — made by real bastard (7)
5 Minister appears when rising anger on left splits county council (6)
6 Cover for members getting pissed on Sunday (6)
7 Go round and castrate Blair's aide? (4,6)
13 Marian's bent on litigation — an expensive habit (6,4)
17 (see 8)
18 Piss-artists puckering pert lips (8)
19 Spotting Nige madly hugging agent (7)
21 Just the place for brats at work? (6)
22 Tebbit, having lost the race — no good, on the decline (6)
26 Southern support for religious arse makes you puke (4)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 10.05.96. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 51

(Winner: Brian Ferguson)

ACROSS: 7 Speaker 8 Exodus 10 Apollo 11 Untruths 12/28 Chattering classes 14 Toll 15 Escorts 17 Unicorn 20 Slob 22 Sacred cows 24 Jingoism 25 Equity 27 Repeal 28 (see 12).

DOWN: 1 ASAP 2 Fellatio 3 Sky One 4 Groupie 5 Pentagon 6 Go bust 9 Unholy row 13 Heseltine 16 Testicle 18 Cock-ups 19 Schmuck 21 Bugger 23 Enemas 26 Tosh.

The Secret Diary of John Major aged 47¾

Friday

I am not inconsiderably incandescent with rage, it says in the paper, so it must be true. The reason that these European foreigners will not buy British beef is that the British government said that it wasn't safe. My wife Norman said we should be pleased, because at least someone believed something that we said. Now Mr Herr Franz Fischler, who is an Austrian gentleman with a beard, says that although our beef is quite safe to eat, he has decided it is unsafe, so the ban stays until we have killed all our cows and then they will buy them again (although not of course the ones that have been killed).

Saturday

Today I had to go to Moscow to have my photograph taken with President Yeltsin and Mr Clinton. Before I left I told Mr Heseltine: "You are in charge." "I know," he said. "Please stop coming in here and telling me what I know already." When I arrived in Moscow I was met by Mr Yeltsin, who was swaying around doing a funny Russian dance. "Ah, Mister Major," he said, "how good of you both to come." Then we did the photograph, with me at the end next to the Deputy Finance Minister of Canada, Jean-Claude Moosejaw. "Thank you, gentlemen," said Mr Yeltsin. "This should help us all get re-elected." "Too late for some of us, eh John?" said Mr Clinton, giving me one of his funny winks. He must have been referring to his imminent defeat at the hands of Senator Blair!

Sunday

On the plane home they were giving away free newspapers, i.e. the *Sunday Express*. I was in no small measure shocked to see on the front page that I had described our partners in Europe as "A Bunch of Shits". As soon as I got home I summoned Dr Mawhinney and went to his office to demand a full explanation. "How did such a terrible word come to be printed?" I asked him. "It must be a misprint. Surely what I said is that they are a 'bunch of suits'?" Dr Mawhinney, who is called "doctor" because he is a spin doctor, laughed and said: "That was no misprint, John. *I* told them you'd said that. It is part of your new 'Get tough with Europe' image." "But I would never use language like that," I told him. "You are a complete shit."

Monday

Mr Mawhinney has put me right in the shit by using that word I would never use. What a shit he is. Everybody is very offended. Even Terry rang up to say: "What a good thing father is not still alive to hear a son of his use the S-word. I had to hide our copy of the *Sunday Express* from Shirley, and we were forced to read a decent family newspaper instead, i.e. the *News of the World*."

When I turned on the radio at lunchtime to hear whether Mr Botham had become chairman of the England selectors, I was very interested to hear that Mr Heseltine had declared war on Europe for banning our beef. "If they will not buy our beef we will not buy their fruit," he said. "We shall fight them on the peaches, we shall never surrender." This was a very heartwarming message to hear. "At last," I told Norman, "someone has the guts to speak for England."

When we listened to the 2 o'clock news, Mr Rifkind had joined in saying that if the EU wanted to fight dirty, he could play that game as well. He would tell his wife never to buy a single French Golden Delicious apple ever again. By 3 o'clock even Mrs Shephard had added her support to the new get-tough line, saying that she would not be going on any more agreeable holidays in the Dordogne until August.

These threats were so effective in terrifying the Europeans into not lifting their ban, that by the evening Mr Heseltine was able to call off the war. On the Channel Four News he was very statesmanlike, saying to Mr Snow: "Once again you people are making a big fuss about nothing. Where did you get this nonsense from about banning fruit? We believe in diplomacy, co-operation and reasoned discussion, so shut your face, you leftie scum." Mr Snow had no answer to this and sat there in silence for at least half a minute with his mouth open.

Tuesday

Today all the papers are full of interviews with a very rich businessman called Mr Sir James Goldsmith, who says that he is going to stand at the next election in every constituency at once, on the question of Europe. He says that I am a pathetic wimp who does stand for anything. Well I have news for him. I will not stand for this, oh no! (This joke was written for me by my script writer Mr Morris Norris.) Even the *Daily Telegraph* had written a carefully coded editorial, headed "This Pathetic Wimp" saying that I should resign at once. I have decided to make a brilliant speech which will go down in history by making my position on Europe absolutely clear once and for all.

Wednesday

Today I made my historic speech to thousands of businessmen in the Albert Hall, called after Mr Albert Hall who was presumably a well-known businessman. These are the points I made:

1. We are totally committed to Europe.
2. But Europe has been a disaster for Britain in many ways.
3. However it is absolutely right that we are in it, and we have every intention of coming out.
4. The right place for Britain to be is in the fast lane, but strictly observing the speed limit however many flashing lights there are telling you to get out of the way.
5. I have now draw a very firm line under where I stand on Europe, so we will not hear any more from Mr Goldsmith and his friends.

Thursday

My friend Lord Jeffrey Archer rang me up to tell me about a survey he has done.

"You are going to lose the election," he said. "Thanks to Mr Goldsmith. You cannot afford to ignore very rich tycoons who are interested in politics. They have a lot to offer, and I think you should do a deal with me — I mean him — at once."

Friday

Apparently the health minister Mr Dorrell is going to be the next Prime Minister.

"What rubbish!" I said to my wife Norman when she read it out over our breakfast of Marmite Tea with toast and Goldsmith's "Sir" Jam. "Dorrell is a nonentity who has just made a spectacular mess of everything he is supposed to be in charge of."

"Then he has all the right qualifications," she replied, opening a jar of Gentleman Jimmy's Fishpaste.

"You should try some of this, John," she said. "Everyone's turning to it."

Saturday

I am looking forward to the local elections. Oh yes. At last the country has a chance to show Mr Blair what it thinks of him!

TV HIGHLIGHTS

Karry-On-OK?

by the late Dennis Plodder

(A middle-aged playwright is watching an actor playing himself watching an actor playing himself watching an actor playing himself)

Playwright: The bastards! They've kept it all in! They've left my fucking play just the way I wrote it!

(Buxom blonde sidles in and ogles playwright)

Blonde: Wasn't I in your last play, ducky?

Playwright: Oh no, she's speaking my lines. And they're terrible!

(Middle-aged playwright on television begins to mime old fifties pop-song "They tried to tell me I'm no good". Enter Agent reading from newspaper)

Roy Hudd (for it is he): The *Telegraph* says it's "Plassic Clodder".

Playwright *(takes swig from bottle)*: Bastards!

Hoy Rudd: "Multi-layered texture with old songs and enigmatic dialogue skilfully interwoven. Not since the *Blackeyed Detective*' has the Plodder formula succeeded so triumphantly."

Plodder: Bastard Bastards!

(Playwright on television turns on television to find South Bank Show with Melvyn Bragg interviewing actor playing playwright)

Belvyn Magg: What are you trying to say in this clever, ingenious brilliant piece of drama?

Playwright: Hang on! That's what I asked you to say. What's happening? The whole world is talking about how wonderful I am!

(Cut to buxom blonde being murdered)

Blonde: Shall I get my tits out and put them in the baked beans?

(Enter TV critic in white coat)

Critic: Just turn over, Mr Plodder, I'm going to insert my tongue into your rectum. It won't hurt a bit.

Plodder: You fucking bastard! You've always had it in for me, saying I was a genius!

(Agent reappears)

Hoy Rudd: There are more reviews! The Sunday Times says it's "Piss Poor".

Playwright: Hang on! You're meant to talk in spoonerisms.

Hoy Rudd: I was. The play is "Piss Poor".

(Orchestra in night-club strikes up, playing "When that old Den Plodder goes plod-plod-plodding along". Two Japanese businessmen suddenly join in singing "When dat old Den Prodder goes prod prodding awong")

Playwright: They're singing my lines! And they're still terrible!

(Playwright collapses watching actor playing playwright watching actor playing playwright watching his play on television because no-one else will)

NEXT WEEK: On all four channels simultaneously Dennis Plodder's final masterpiece "Old Lazy Us", in which a number of TV executives put on hours and hours of drama by Dennis Plodder about how TV executives never put on any of his dramas.

HISTORIC 'MATCH SOUVENIR' RETURNS TO NEASDEN

by **E.I. Erewego,** Our Man In The Seats With The Mercury One-To-One Phone And The Telephone Number Of "Leroy In Peckham"

THE SOCCER world was rocked to its foundations yesterday when the box of matches used by Sid and Doris Bonkers to burn down the stadium in 1966 was returned to Neasden FC.

Local newspaper the *Neasden Evening Advertiser & Car Mart* negotiated a huge six-figure fee (6p) with German souvenir collector Hans von Hüligan, who had pocketed the matches during the historic blaze at Neasden Bridge.

Match of the Day

Von Hüligan had given the matches (Bryant & Fergie Old Legover Safety Strike Red-Tipped Vestas: Average contents 69) as a 21st birthday present to his son Adolf Von Hüligan, who had planned to turn them into a full-size model of the Zeppelin airship the Hindenberg, which he was then going to ignite during its maiden voyage.

His mother, Eva Von Hüligan, 57, however, persuaded Adolf to sell the matches back to Neasden, initially demanding £80,000 and eventually settling for 6p.

Ashen Place

Said Ron Knee, 59: "This is a historic day for the club. The matches have come home to their rightful place in the trophy cabinet. They will sit next to Baldy Pevsner's wig which came loose during a goalmouth melee in 1938; the embalmed remains of Wally Foot's leg lost in the same melee; and the brown paper bag containing the bung given to me at Neasden Hill Service Station by an agent acting for Dollis Hill on the understanding that I would henceforth lose all matches — except, obviously, this box."

Late News

The Neasden Stadium was ablaze last night, and arson was suspected when fans Sid and Doris Bonkers told police: "We did it, using the historic 1966 matches. It seemed criminal to let these wonderful matches moulder behind glass when they could be making history once more."

Late Score

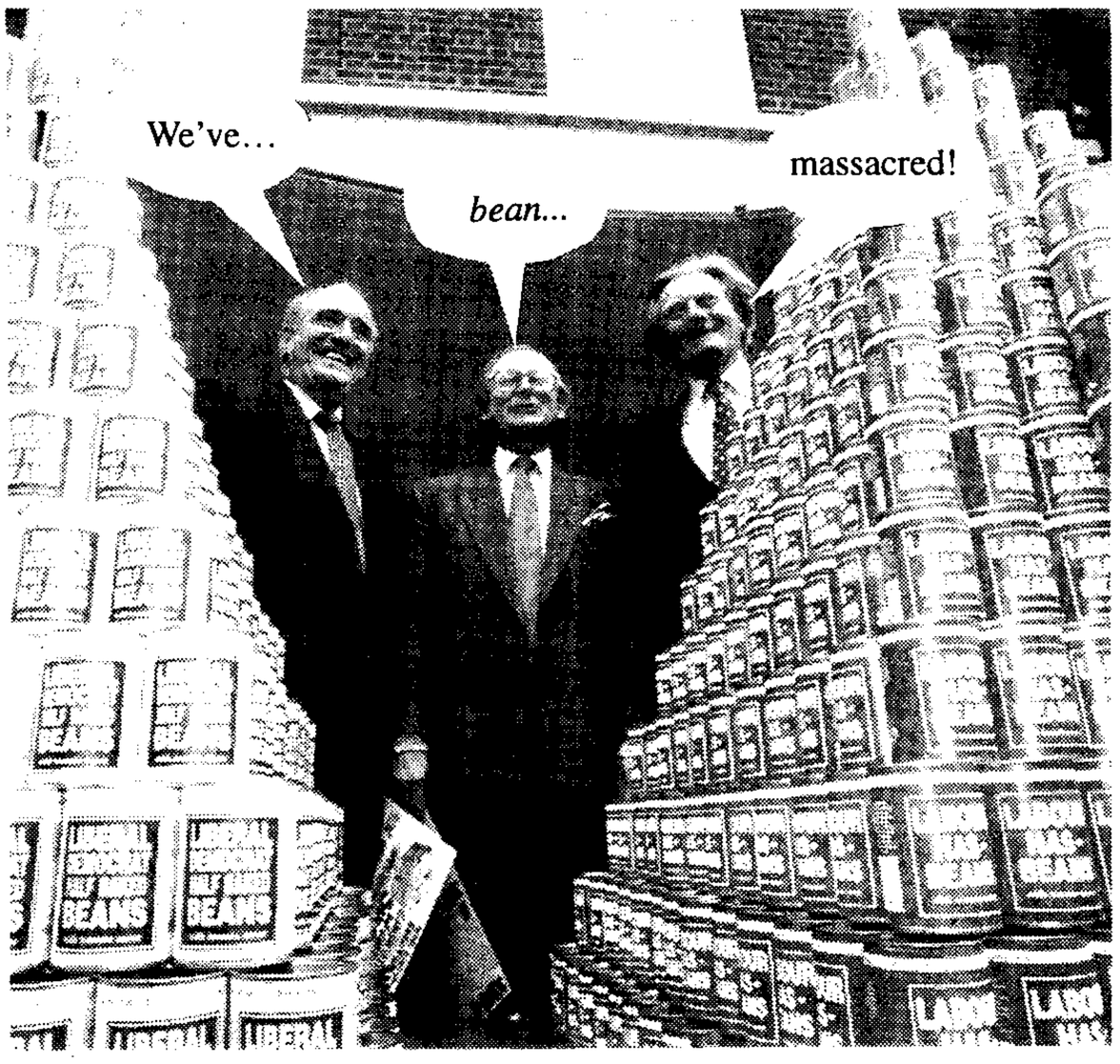
The Al-Fayed North Circular Trophy

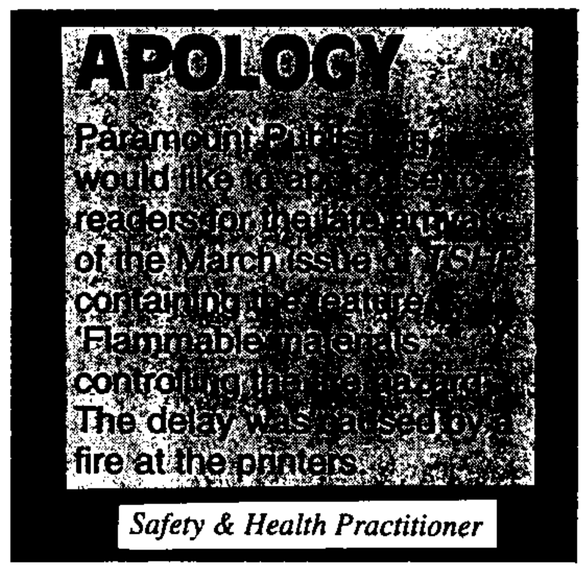
The Racing Club of Cairo 0

Neasden F.C. 0

(Fire stopped play)

TORY LOCAL ELECTION SHOCK




APOLOGY
Paramount Publishing would like to apologise to readers for the late arrival of the March issue of YSH containing the feature 'Flammable materials controlling the fire hazard'. The delay was caused by a fire at the printers.
Safety & Health Practitioner

COURT CIRCULAR

KENSINGTON PALACE

Her Royal Highness The Princess of Wales will today visit Harefield Hospital in Uxbridge to witness open-heart surgery on a 7-year-old boy. She will be attended by Sir Magdi Yacoub, the distinguished surgeon, and 200 photographers and television cameramen.

She will then visit a multiple pile-up on the M26 to witness a number of bodies being pulled from the wreckage. She will be attended by members of the Regional Ambulance Trust, the Fire Service and a number of passers-by.

Later she will be flown to Rwanda to witness the massacre of a village. She will be attended by the Red Cross, UN observers, and several hundred deranged members of the Hutu Militia.

At midnight she will visit a London cemetery where she will witness the exhumation of corpses to be used in medical experiments. She will be attended by Messrs Burke and Hare, the distinguished grave-robbers, and a number of zombies, ghouls and members of the Living Dead.

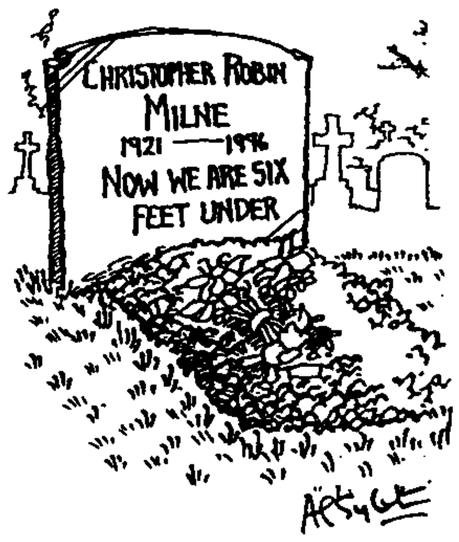
School news

St Cakes

Referendum Term starts today. There are 397 boys in the school, 291 girls and 14 don't-knows. C.J.D. Goldfinger (Annabel's) is Head of Euro-Sceptics. Ms B.S.E. Currie (Salmonella's) is Chief Europhile. The John Prescott Assisted Place Bursary for Boys of Deprived Background goes to T.S.B. Farquharson-Melchett from St Biscuit's Preparatory School. A. Jaspan (Preston's) has been relieved of his duties as Editor of *The Cakeian* owing to a decline in sales from 3 to 2, and has been replaced by W. Hutton (Rusbridger's). HRH The Princess of Wales will attend Suicides after the GCSE Exams on 3 June. There will be a performance of *Salad Days*, directed by Sir Edward Twinky (OC Trousers 1935-6) in the Dennis Potter Memorial Theatre on 4 July. Prizes will be given on St Cake's Day by Mr Mohamed al-Fayed who will open the new Harrods Tuck Shop. The OC Dinner and Dance will be held in the Happy Eater Restaurant at the Redwood Service Area north of Junction 78 on the M59 (tickets from the Bursar, Major David Irving OC, Goebbels Cottage, Goering-on-Sea, Sussex). Exclusions are on 10 July.

Poems from Eye Readers

Requiescat



Seventy-five, he beds down in a box,
Hands folded tight and bereft of his locks.
Hush, hush, sorrow who must:
Christopher Robin has bitten the dust.

Eager his little blond head to forswear,
Turning his back upon Piglet and Bear,
Hush, hush, God sometimes slips:
Christopher Robin has cashed in his chips.

Caught in a moment, composed in a trice,
Still immortality comes at a price.
Hush, hush, Homer may nod;
Christopher Robin is under the sod.

Tom Bishop

Oh who is that little fellow at the foot of the bed?
Why it's Christopher Robin, keeled over dead
Who will tell Nanny her wee one's no more?
That her bright little sunbeam is cold on the floor?

Will it be Piglet or will it be Pooh
To spring the bad news — or will it be you?

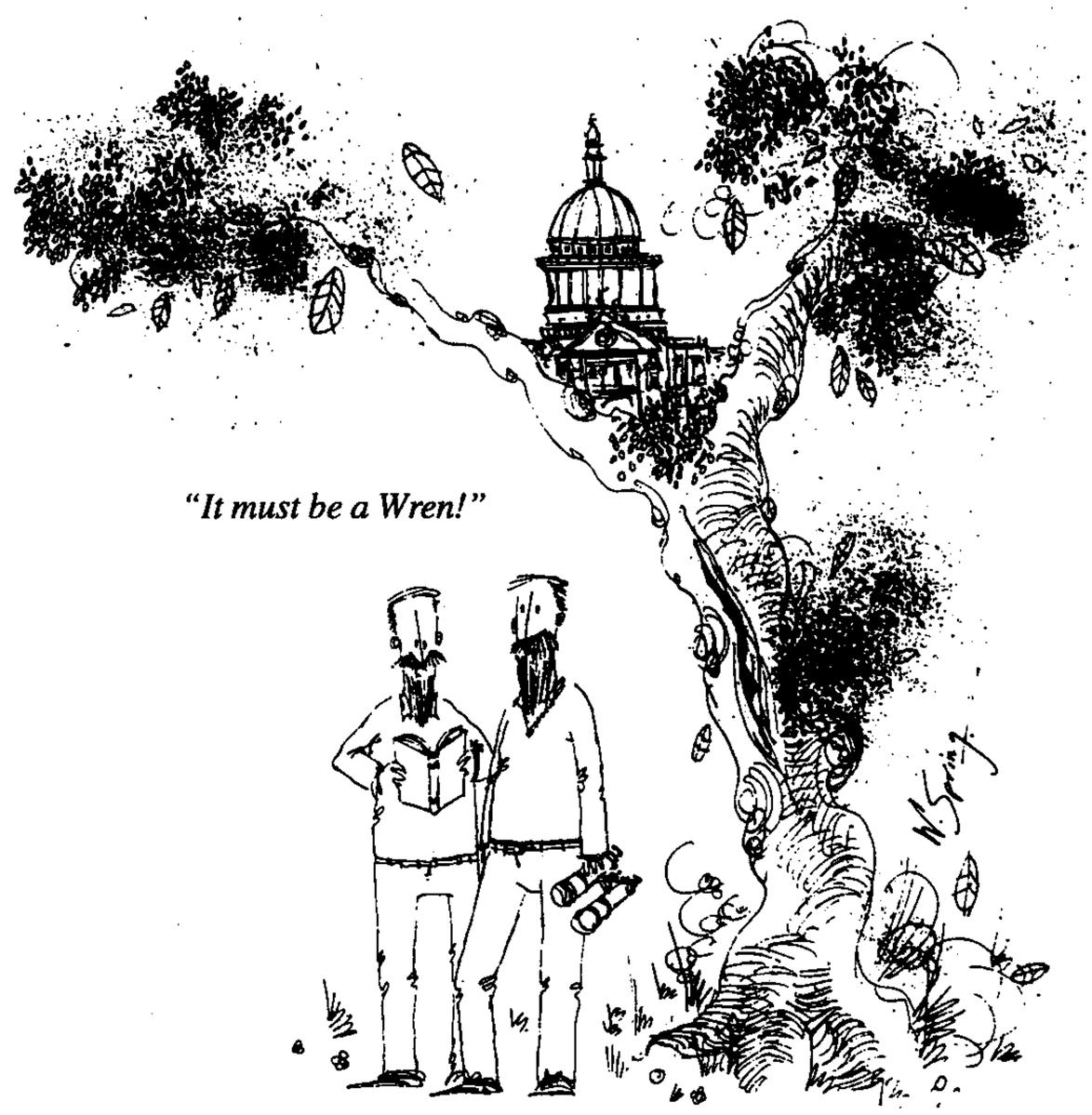
No more shall we frolic with woozels and wols
No more visits to palaces on long summer hols
No more to suck honey from hives full of bees
And be stuck in rabbit holes up to our knees...

For the world, in a way, has ended you see.

Larry Wayne Thribbsucker III

Mortuary label around a stiff toe
No pulse is a-beating, the temperature's low
Don't bother to whisper, we've got past that stage.
Christopher Robin has died of old age.

Will Watts



"It must be a Wren!"

IN THE SALEROOM

GNOMEBY'S

Highly Important Memorabilia — the property of Jackie Bouvier Kennedy Onassis
(That's enough names. Ed.)

1 Pair Sunglasses *(right lens slightly broken)*.
Guide price $2 million

1 Greek Fish *(stuffed and mounted)*. Possibly Takifish. Caught by members of the crew of the late Aristotle Onassis's yacht.
Guide price $15 million

1 Tortoiseshell Comb *(some teeth missing)*, the property of the late President Kennedy, bearing the inscription "Property of the Crillon Hotel, Paris".
Guide price $750,000

1 Very Important Pair of Navy Socks *(odd)*, possibly once worn by the late President.
Guide price $315,000

1 Part-Eaten Hershey Bar, formerly the property of the late Robert Kennedy, believed to be in his possession at the time of his untimely assassination.
Guide price $315,000

1 Copy of Playboy Magazine *(centrefold missing)*, believed to be the property of the late Aristotle Onanist.
Guide price $1

1 Grassy Knoll (presently the property of Dallas Dunkin' Donuts Co).
(That's enough Kennedyana. Ed.)

The Book of Peres

Chapter One

1. And it came to pass that when Rab-in the Peacemaker was slain, the children of Israel chose the man called Per-es to be their leader.
2. For, they said, surely Per-es too is a man of peace, like unto Rab-in.
3. And Per-es ruled over Israel for five long minutes in peace.
4. But then the Hammas-ites and the Hez-bollites in the land of Leb-an-on took counsel and waxed wroth in their tents.
5. For they said unto themselves there can be no peace so long as the children of Israel remain in the lands which are rightfully ours.
6. So they rose up, just as in the days of the Araf-ites, and did rain down fire and brimstone upon the shores of Gali-lee, even the rock-et which is known as the Katy-usha.
7. But because the Katy-usha waxeth old in years, and was made by the Russian-ites, none of the children of Israel was harmed, even unto the hair of their heads.
8. But nevertheless the children of Israel waxed even more wroth than the Hezbollites, which is pretty wroth.
9. And they said among themselves this Per-es is an wimp, like unto an old lion that trembleth with fear even when an bee cometh nigh.
10. Even so is Per-es.
11. And they said let us choose he that is called Netan-yu in his stead. For he is a man who understandeth the need for smiting, even the smiting that is necessary to maintain the peace process.
12. And when Per-es heard this, he was sore afraid. For he sayeth unto himself, Peres, thy hour hath come.
13. It is time to do some smiting like unto Rab-in, and Shamir and Beg-in. For these men were honoured in their generation and were the glory of their times.
14. Then Peres girded his loins and, behold, he went over into the land of Leb-an-on, and there he smote the following: namely the Hez-bollites, the Leb-an-ites, the Druze-ites, the sons of UN which were Fiji-ites, and anyone else that moveth.
15. So he smote them, in their hundreds and their thousands, even unto the old men, the women and the children, until the smoke rose up into the heaven.
16. And the Leb-an-ites and the Hez-boll-ites and all the other -ites were driven from their dwellings until half the land of Leb-an-on was made an desert, empty save only for the locust and the cock-a-trice.
17. And there was much wailing and gnashing of teeth, and whirring of cameras, for the hosts of Med-ia were encamped there also.
18. And Peres looked upon the smiting and saw that it was good.
19. And he said this smiting will surely bring peace to the land of Israel, for the Hez-boll-ites will see the folly of their wickedness and come to beg for peace at the court of Per-es.
20. That is, if any of the Hez-boll-ites are left alive, which after all the smiting I very much doubt.
21. But it came to pass that when the smoke cleareth, the numbers of the Hez-boll-ites were even greater than they had been before.
22. And all the Leb-an-ites and the Syrian-ites and the Iran-ites joined together and said We have learned the bitter lesson of Per-es. That is to say that there will be no peace until we have driven the Israelites into the sea.

(To be continued for ever)

The Test Umpires' Training Centre at Lilleshall

Poetry Corner

In Memoriam Dr Kalim Siddiqui, Radical Islamic Leader and Founder of the "Muslim Parliament of Britain"

So. Farewell
Then
Kalim Siddiqui.

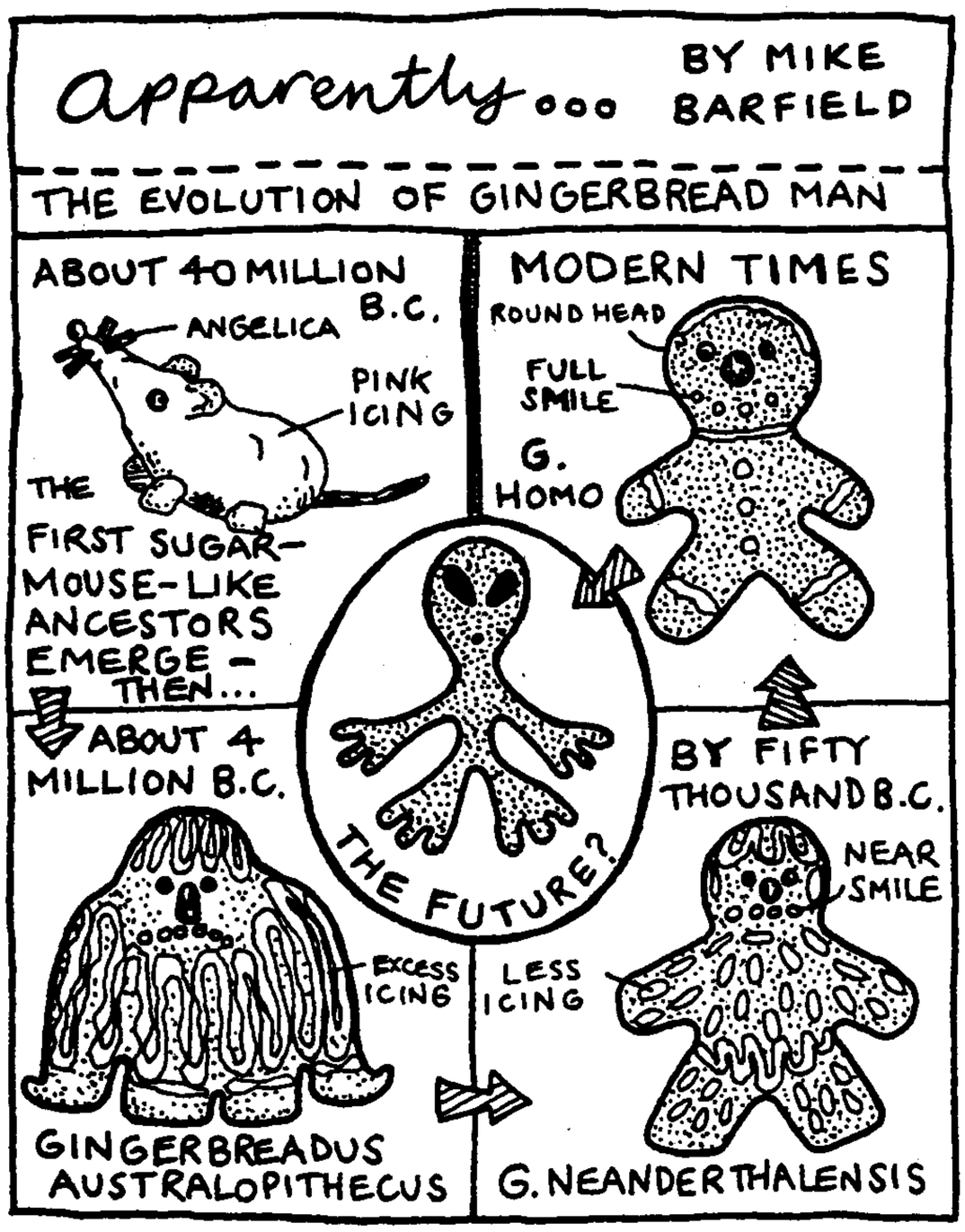
Defender of the
Fatwa.

"Death to Rushdie."
That was
Your catchphrase.

"Death to
Siddiqui."

That seems
To have been
Allah's.

E.J. Thribb (17½)



That Queen's 70th Birthday Takeaway Family Dinner in full

From The Foil Tin

Burnt Windsor Soup

— ✻ —

Press Leaks

— ✻ —

York Ham (without Duchess Potatoes)

— ✻ —

Moules Marinamowatt

— ✻ —

Salade à la Greque (Phil)

— ✻ —

Queen Mother of Puddings

or

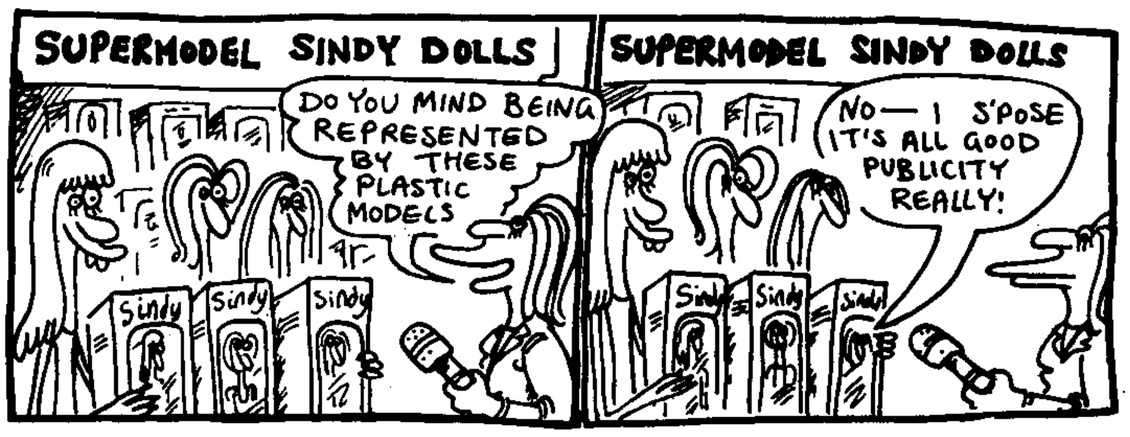
Apple Charlesclotte with Camilla Ice Cream

To Drink

Princess Margaritas
Di Coke
Cellu Lite Beer
Gilbey's Grin (shurely 'Gin'? Ed)

SUPERMODELS

KERBER



GREY STRIP 'A FLOP'

by **E.I. Erewegotothecountry**, Our Man On The Backbenches With A Boots Healthbar Sandwich (Hummus and Beansprout on Rye) And A Telephone Kiosk Card For 'Yasmin — Egyptian Lessons'

THE WORLD of politics was rocked to its foundations last night by the news that top team captain John Major is to drop the grey strip which has for so long been his hallmark.

Said the tight-lipped manager, Big Brian Mawhinney, 57:

"We have yet to win wearing the grey shirt, socks, suit, shoes, tie etc. So we are looking at a whole series of other options."

The ashen-faced supremo continued: "There are lots of other colours we could choose. At the moment we are looking at grey, which I reckon could be a winner."

John Major is 52.

LATE SCORE

Staffordshire South-East By-Election Trophy

Tories 0
New Labour 1
(J. Major [o.g.])

A Doctor writes

■ AS a doctor, I am sometimes asked: "Doctor, can I come into your operating theatre to watch while you are carrying out a particularly gory operation?"

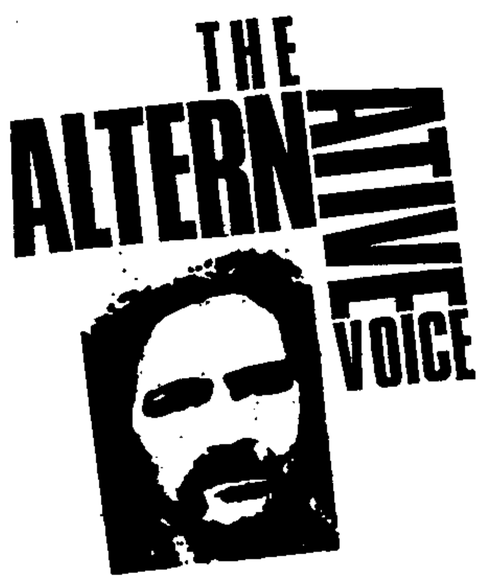
The simple answer is: "Are you a member of the Royal Family?"

If the answer is "yes", a responsible doctor will ask a further question: "Will you bring in the TV cameras so I get lots of coverage?"

If the answer is again "yes", then the operation (or *Photoopportunitas princessus abnormalis*, to give it is full medical title) can proceed.

If you are worried about untrained personnel hanging around while you are undergoing life-and-death surgery, you are advised to sod off.

© A. Doctor Yacoub, The Frankenstein Clinic, Herts.



Winston Spart, Co-Chair of the Brixton and Streatham Anti-Racism Pro-Ganja Rastafarian Alliance, and editor of *Babylon and Babylonmen*.

■ Basically, it is totally sickening for those of us who are of Afro-Caribbean heritage to witness the sickening spectacle of ITN newsreader Trevor MacDonald pontificating himself before the white racist barons of the capitalist media in order to oppress the genuine aspirations of working-class persons of African descent by the tool of patriarchal colonialist language, i.e. English, the language of imperialist fascists down the ages, when he should be promoting the real linguistic heritage of the Caribbean diaspora as embodied in the work of such legendary rap artists as Boyz In The Chippie, Snoo Snoo Glue and, er, anyway this sickening Uncle Tom sitting there on TV earning a fortune is nothing more than a glaring reminder of how it is impossible for black people to get to the top in the racist world that is Britain today, and, er... *(contd p. 94)*

THE REFERENDUM PARTY

Referendum Bulletin No. 94
From the Dorchester Hotelbunker

Achtung!!

To the People von England — the Hour is Come, Der Tag ist Hier!

Every day now our gallant armies of Referendum candidates are recording ever more glorious victories over the feeble remnants of John Major's once-vaunted Conservatives.

Are you listening, English Johnny?

You now have so little time left, before your pathetic dreamworld crumbles into dust. *(Strokes white piranha fish on lap)*

The question before the British people is very simple, Mr Bond.

Who rules Britain? Brussels or me?

The answer must go up from 50 million voices raised in unison. Referendum uber alles!

Only I, Sir Jams Goldfinger, can express the will of the people, which is my will.

You are weak, Mr Major, and in this world only the strong can survive.

Guards, take our friend Mr Bond to his quarters and make him watch my interviews with my old friend Sir David Frost.

That will bring him to his senses. Heh heh heh.

(Fishpaste climbs into space module and leaves for his Mexican hideaway)

Issued by the Referendum Party of Great Britain

(prop. and only member Obergrüppenführer Sir Jams von Fishfeldt)

BUCKINGHAM PALACE 16th, 20th August, 12th September, 2 days bed & breakfast from £79.50.
S. Wales Echo

Bovey Tracey: change of use from butcher's shop to funeral parlour at 11 Fore Street, for J. & K. Davey.
Mid-Devon Advertiser

CASE OF 50 BASF chrome Hi Infidelity tapes, £55 ono. —
Wolverhampton Express & Star

Great Bores Of Today.

"... there's nothing in them there's never anything to read and look at these clothes who on earth do they think is going to wear them? and is this an advertisement or is it an article? you can't tell look at this a whole supplement on lipstick who cares? this month's is worse than ever and who are all these people? I've never heard of any of them she just looks ridiculous in those boots there's nothing to read and they cost a fortune this one is nearly three quid and there's six pages of photos of paella really what is that about? op-art handbags? no one is interested in that oh no not another Kate Moss photo spread it's always the same old crowd and they're all so skinny nobody wants to see that there's absolutely nothing to read what star sign are you? Libra isn't it? oh that's good romance is in the air for you and I've got a new job after you with that one..."

Celeb

LIGGER

SO I SAID TO HER, I LIKE YOUR NEW STYLE, IT SUITS YOU, HONESTLY IT DOES...
IT'S SHORTER, MORE CASUAL BUT STILL DEFINITELY YOU.
AND SHE SAYS, PRACTICALLY IN TEARS "I WISH I'D NEVER HAD IT CUT NOW, GREGORY."
THE HRH FROM HER TITLE?
YEAH. POOR OLD FERGIE. SHE'S TAKEN IT VERY BADLY

DIARY

STEVEN BERKOFF

Breathless, I was aghast. Not for me the idle winds of crushed fag ends, nor Agamemnon's sorry ghost of shattered turds. Aghast, I was breathless, for I was looking into the stark light of truth, unvanquished and unbidden. Courageous, bold, cryptic yet iconoclastic, simmering with a tumult of agonies yet as calm and centred as a gushing torrent of burning flesh. It's not often you see beauty close-up. And it's frightening.

For me, that's what looking into the shaving mirror every morning is all about. I look deep into my own face and I open my mouth as if in a rictus of past torment, and, filling my toothbrush with Colgate I delve, delve, delve in search of my very soul. And then, my God, I *rinse*.

I've mimed a toothbrush, you know. In what is in my view one of the most useful and informative items ever written about me, Robert Hewison in the *Sunday Times* praised my "bold" performance, adding: "Mr Berkoff delivers one of the great toothbrushes of the year."

First, I got on the floor and tried to *think* myself *toothbrushy*. Very long, very thin, with arms outstretched and a head full of nylon bristles. Still. Calm. *Powerful*. Chest concave, to represent that bit where the thumb seems to grind its way into the suppurating plastic. Legs twisted and corkscrewed, to give handle more *grip*. Stillness. Then sudden scamperings. Up, down, up, down, up, down. Backwards, forwards, backwards, forwards, backwards, forwards. Try and get the rhythm. That's it. I've got it! *My God, I am brushing somebody's teeth!*

I knew then and I know now just what it is to be a toothbrush. To be an actor is to live on the edge, outside the gum, between the fillings, have a good rinse. Now, when I find myself caught in a busy high street, bestriding it like a Colossus, I nip into Boot's the Chemist, march ravenously towards the dental hygiene counter, strip away layer after layer after layer of the slimey yellow mould of convention, stretch out my arms, corkscrew my legs, concave my chest and hop onto the toothbrush dispenser. What I am is a toothbrush. A toothbrush is *what I am*. But this is Britain. Zipped-up, strangulated, self-important, repressed, class-ridden, turd-like Britain. So an assistant approaches me to ask me — *ME!* — what I am doing on the toothbrush dispenser. It takes my breath away.

Has the poor fool never heard of Wisdom?

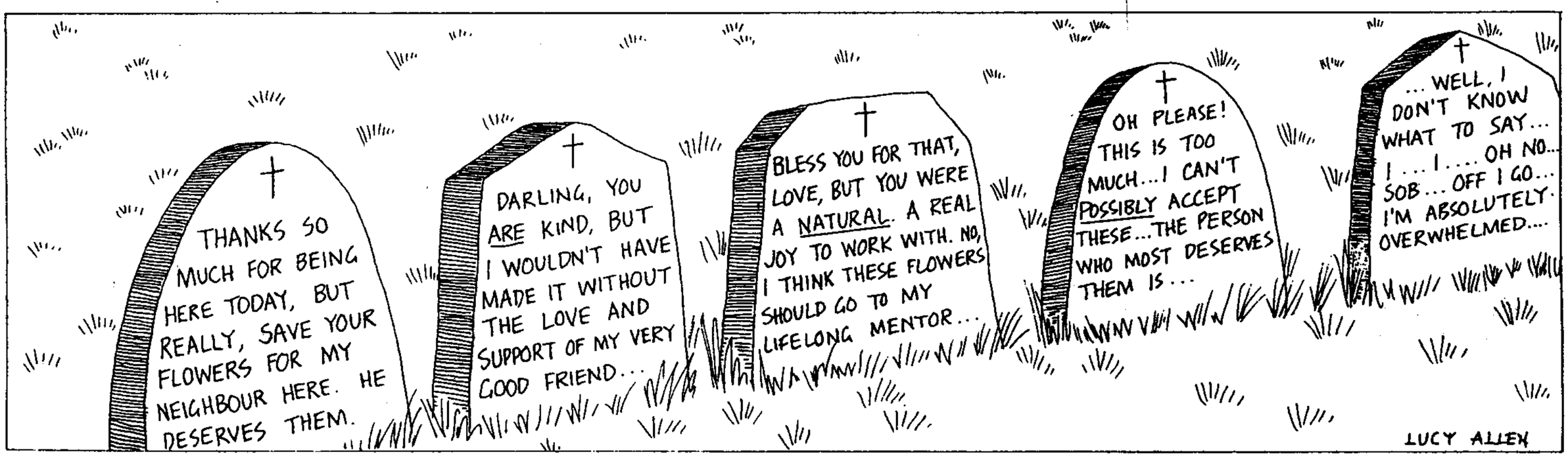
My theatre is a savage theatre. On the edge. Out there. In here. Off the wall. Up the mountain. Down the volcano. Into the very darkest reaches of the swamp. Sharp left, second right, you can't miss it. I want my audiences to be put through the mangle, I want to make them feel their guts spilling out onto the carpeted floor. I want them to spew a thousand spews, to vomit all their middle-class, middlebrow, yuppy, frumpy, dumpy, clotted, boring, arse-licking, bri-nyloned, stiff-collared, straight-laced, after-you-with-the-teaspoon Algernon, comfortable, cosy, bowler-hatted, anal-retentive, suburban, mealy-mouthed self-righteousness into their smug and grubby little laps, so that it can be chewed by a million maggots. I want to hold the mirror up to their nature, smash it — CLINK! CLINK! CLINK! — over their heads and see them skewered like Dali's St Christoper — YELP! OUCH! ARGH! by a thousand shards of glass as sharp as sharpened daffodils. But talk about an uphill struggle. They pay their money, take their seats, watch, listen, have a drink and ice in the interval, watch some more, listen some more, applaud and then leave. Bastards. Next time I'll really show 'em. "YOU'RE BARRED!" I'll scream as they try to enter my savage theatre. And if that doesn't make them wrench out their hearts and feed them to their own children, nothing bloody will.

Pray hold thy wrath, great Titan, whene'er the actor cometh! Down the centuries, I have worked with some of the most magnificent of geniuses of the international stage. I once met Sir Larry Olivier, that veritable brooding Beowulf of the starlit balcony. I was standing there, both solitary and gregarious, serene yet wild, like a prowling wolf, in windswept jungle fronds of the bar of the National Theatre when Olivier approached. Observant, canny, shiney and alert as a metal dishwasher, tempestuous, complex, charismatic, a star for all to see: no, I think shall never forget the impression I made on him. I held court for many minutes, informing him that mine was a savage theatre, a theatre without compromises, a theatre that bestrides the globe like a spider. I could tell he was stunned, gutted, forced to rethink a lifetime in theatre — yes Olivier's was the most expressive back upon which my courageous eyes have ever set.

The constipated, coagulated, cackhanded critics, castrated like clip-clopping cupcakes, condemn me for "blowing my own trumpet". Not so, the sheer genius of my performances is confirmed from many other sources too. If I look in my diary for 1986, for instance, I note that the entry for May 23rd commends me for "A MAGNIFICENT PERFORMANCE — LITERALLY SHATTERING", and the very next day I am acclaimed as "THE ONE TRUE GENIUS OF THE ENGLISH STAGE". Unlike the schmucks and mediocrities of the bourgeois theatre, I remain in touch with my own power. I see the world afresh with the antennae of the artist, and it's a place where things simply do not happen without a nod from me. In November, 1963, John Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas at *exactly* the same time, give or take a few minutes, as I strode on stage for my third performance as Rosencrantz in *Hamlet* at the Roundhouse. Ditto the sinking of the Belgrano: at the time I was tackling, with a savage grace, the washing-up, and I had just submerged an eggy saucepan when the news came through. And events which might seem ordinary and everyday to others are to me as electric as a radiator. Like, I have a wristwatch, a magic wristwatch. Whenever I look at it and it says, say, "12 o'clock", I know that in Westminster Big Ben will follow suit, and that as a result it will chime 12. How pained am I by the world's obtuseness, that my powers should be so derided by fools and jackals! "Agamemnon bows/ His mighty brow/ And splatters acne/ PLIP PLOP PLIP PLOP/ o'er the cabin floor" (Berkoff's East 1981).

You know, sometimes it's manly to sob.

A BRIEF LOOK AT... SHOWBIZ GRAVEYARDS


THANKS SO MUCH FOR BEING HERE TODAY, BUT REALLY, SAVE YOUR FLOWERS FOR MY NEIGHBOUR HERE. HE DESERVES THEM.
DARLING, YOU ARE KIND, BUT I WOULDN'T HAVE MADE IT WITHOUT THE LOVE AND SUPPORT OF MY VERY GOOD FRIEND...
BLESS YOU FOR THAT, LOVE, BUT YOU WERE A NATURAL. A REAL JOY TO WORK WITH. NO, I THINK THESE FLOWERS SHOULD GO TO MY LIFELONG MENTOR...
OH PLEASE! THIS IS TOO MUCH... I CAN'T POSSIBLY ACCEPT THESE... THE PERSON WHO MOST DESERVES THEM IS...
... WELL, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY... I ... I .... OH NO... SOB... OFF I GO... I'M ABSOLUTELY OVERWHELMED....
LUCY ALLEN

Literary Review

Cap'n Bob, R.I.P-off

The Fourth Estate
Jeffrey Archer
(HarperCollins, £16.99 until discounted)

JEFFREY Archer has always had trouble telling truth from fiction. That little learning difficulty has been quite a source of embarrassment to him in the past. You know: it turned out he had not gone to Wellington in quite the sense most people thought; he wasn't up at Oxford in the way that is usually understood by the term; he sent money to a prostitute he had never met. And so forth.

The bad news, the repulsive news for those of us who are poor but honest, is that in his new novel Archer has probably succeeded in turning this inadequacy to profitable account once more. His publishers rudely say that this novel is "the most thrilling he has written since *Kane & Abel*" — thus writing off the last five as even worse than that pillar of bilge. Unfortunately, they are right: *The Fourth Estate* certainly is a better commercial product than such treasurable flops as *Honour Among Thieves* and *Twelve Red Herrings*.

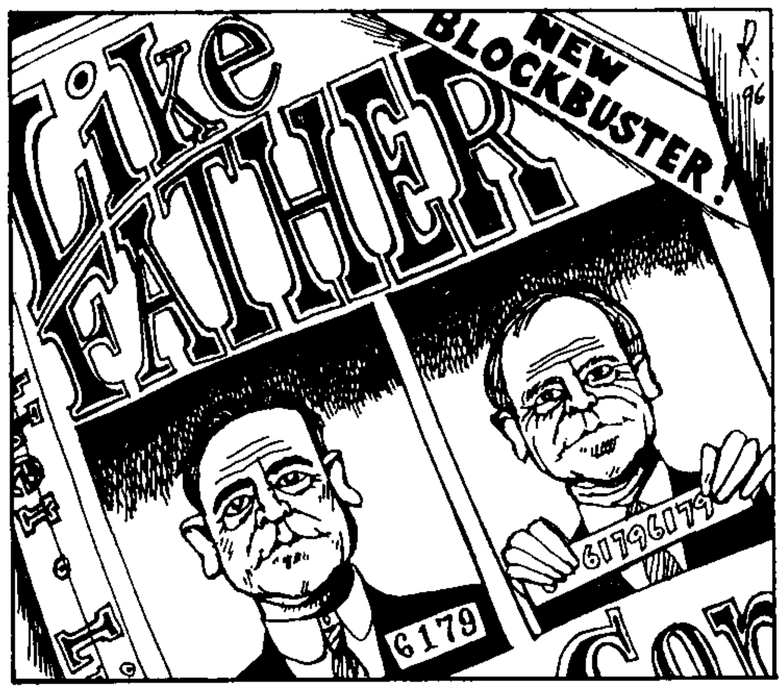
The reason, you see, is that Jeffrey Archer has not written this book in any sense of the term that matters. It's not really a Jeffrey Archer novel at all. This immediately lifts it clear of that uniquely blighted subsection of books that *are* Jeffrey Archer novels.

The Fourth Estate is, quite simply — more simply than you can appreciate until you've tried it — the stories of Rupert Murdoch and Robert Maxwell ripped off from the biographies and served up together, trivially disguised. That Archer has no shame is hardly news; yet there's still something surprising and depressing about the effrontery of this.

Tom Bower went through a long and presumably often frightening struggle to get his exposé, *Maxwell the Outsider*, published. Now that Fat Bob's safely under the sod, Archer has pillaged Bower's text and he stands to make a great deal of money as a result. But there is not a single acknowledgement in the book of his sources. Instead there is this outrageous statement: "Jeffrey Archer asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of this work. This work of fiction was inspired by actual events, but is otherwise the product of the author's imagination."

Perhaps it's true, though? Jeffrey Archer's imagination is so tiny, so shrivelled and deformed, that it is probably literally correct that the minuscule parts of this book that are not "inspired by actual events" (ie laboriously transcribed from other people's research) do represent the full extent of his creative powers.

Maxwell's real first name was Lajbi. Archer's brilliant variation? "Lubji." Only one letter, but unmistakeably the work of the man vaunted by some troll on the *Mail on Sunday* as "the greatest storyteller of our age", don't you agree? The hand of the master, what?



When Maxwell first got involved in newspapers while serving in occupied Berlin, he supervised one published by one Arno Scholz. In the Archer version, the publisher is brilliantly named "Arno Schultz." Two letters! The great imagination on overtime.

When Maxwell joined the British army he called himself "Private Leslie du Maurier", "a name he had chosen from the brand of cigarettes", Bower notes. Archer's character calls himself "John Player". Now this is really going it. Archer has understood the principle on which Maxwell was working and supplied a completely different example. Extraordinary!

And there are plenty of other examples of such creative daring. *The Sun* is brilliantly rechristened as another heavenly body, *The Globe*. The headline about the sinking of the Belgrano, Gotcha! becomes "Bullseye!" Obviously that was the ideal word the *Sun*'s headline writers were grasping dimly towards all along but failed to locate, not having the master storyteller present to show them the way.

The story of the Murdoch and Maxwell — sorry, the "Townsend" and "Armstrong" — empires is, of course, rather a good story, whoever tells it. Archer, ever the tiresome tease, sets it up with a first chapter pretending that Townsend and Armstrong face the financial collapse of their over-extended empires at the same time. Which one will survive and which one will go overboard? The problem with this cliffhanger as a source of suspense is that we know the answer, don't we? Moreover, if you've read Bower's genuinely entertaining biography of Maxwell or any of the Murdoch books, you know the route to the ending too, making it a weary trek.

There are just a few personal inflections detectable. There is, of course, the mindless sexism with which Archer doggily describes all the female characters. "As Susan entered the restaurant, several men in the room turned to watch her walk across to the corner table. She was wearing a pink suit that emphasized her slim figure..." At one point, when Townsend is trying to charm a 67-year-old women into selling her shares in a newspaper, it is simply said: "Townsend smiled at her as if she was twenty-five years younger."

Then there is Archer's tedious *Boy's Own* infatuation with bets and challenges of all kinds. As a young man, Townsend is given 90 days by his mother to prove himself as a worthy heir to his father's papers. To get the 67-year-old woman's shares, he has to get her novel on to the *New York Times* bestseller list. Armstrong and Townsend even bet each other about the circulation of their papers.

Throughout, Archer seems to believe that the only real key to business success is insider dealing, pulling off a fast one. He's helplessly fascinated by trickery despite having only a schoolboy's understanding of it. (Much the most lifelike section of the novel is that describing the spivvy exploits of Townsend as a schoolboy in Australia and Armstrong as an adolescent in Eastern Europe). Both Townsend and Armstrong get control of businesses by a series of bribes and deceptions.

Archer's tip here is that all the greatest coups require barefaced lying. Townsend takes over his first paper by saying he won't interfere with editorial decisions. He does and tells the indignant editor "I'm sorry... I lied". It's Archer's last word. Believe it.

Books & Bookmen

■ **JEFFREY ARCHER, the master storyteller, has been on top form in the run-up to publication of his new masterpiece,** *The Fourth Estate*.

First, sources close to him revealed that HarperCollins had paid him $50m for his next three books. HarperCollins immediately denied the story, saying it did not understand how such a misunderstanding had arisen but that Jeffrey had an existing contract worth less than half that sum.

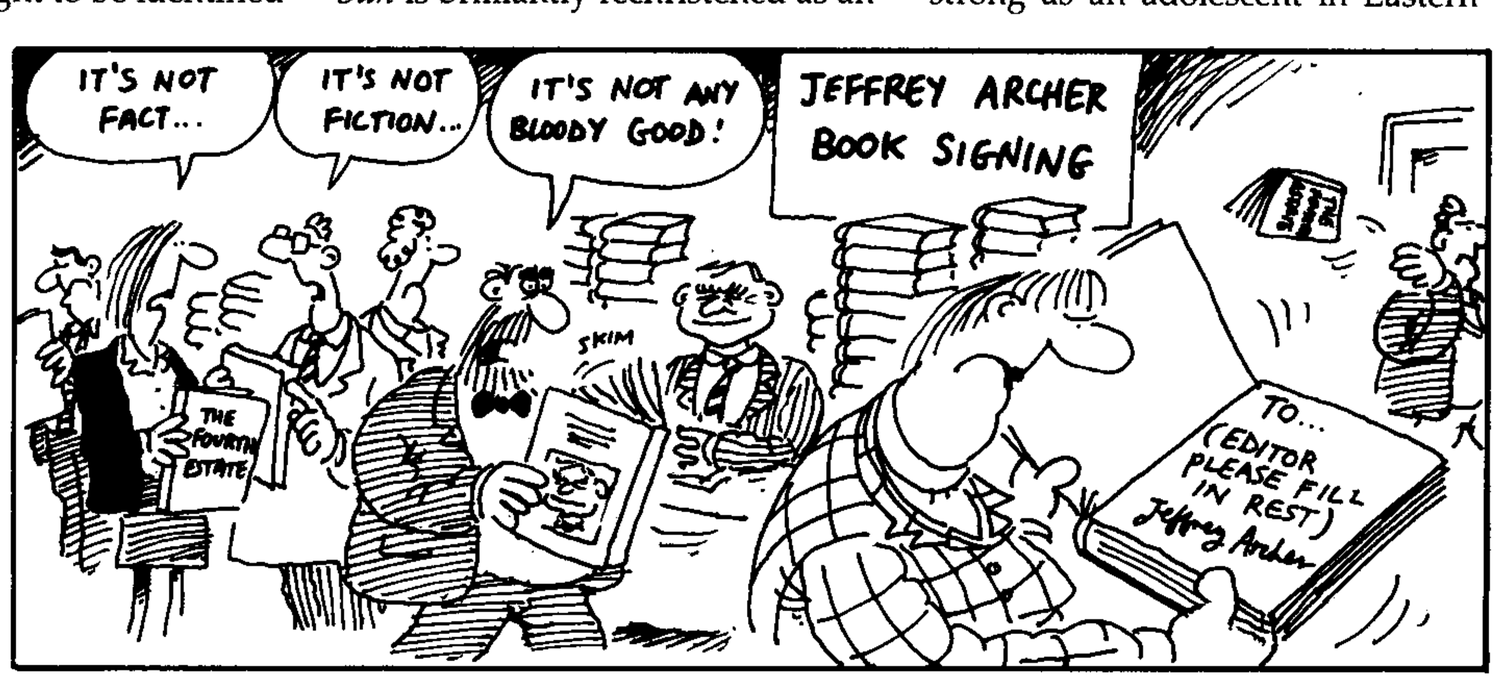
Then he told an *Evening Standard* **journalist that "Spielberg is reading the book at the moment". The journalist checked. A source at Amblin, Spielberg's company, said Amblin had turned down the book.**

Last week the *Sunday Times*, **like HarperCollins part of Rupert Murdoch's empire (***The Fourth Estate* **is "based on" the rivalry between Robert Maxwell and Rupert Murdoch, the latter heroically portrayed) obligingly printed the news that "more than 260,000 copies" of the novel had been sold "to bookshops and supermarkets".** *The Fourth Estate* **was "easily outstripping its nearest contemporary rival, Jilly Cooper's** *Appassionata*.

Where can this story have come from? The dig at Jilly Cooper offers a clue. Jeffrey has been annoyed about Jilly's success ever since her novel *Polo* **was at number one and he, about to see publication of** *As the Crow Flies*, **cheerfully phoned her up to say: "You won't be there long!" He was mistaken:** *Polo* **proved to be somewhat more popular with the public that his offering.**

Jeffrey has bounced back before, though — bouncing back is what he's famous for. If the *Sunday Times* **figure is correct, he has sold, in advance of publication, more than twice as many copies of** *The Fourth Estate* **as Jilly has sold, several weeks after publication, of** *Appassionata*.

The *Sunday Times*'s **source also provided the information that** *The Fourth Estate* **was "the first of a £15 million three-book deal with HarperCollins".**



☐ RICHARD COHEN, the amiable publisher who "edited" many of Jeffrey Archer's early novels, was asked to write a piece about his lordship for the *Daily Telegraph* to coincide with the appearance of *The Fourth Estate*.

Harmless enough, one might think, since Cohen is far too gentlemanly to dish any dirt. But when he mentioned the piece to Archehole, his old chum became highly agitated and expressly forbade him to write anything at all. What, one wonders, is he frightened of?

'Bookworm'

footnotes

BETTY BLEW IT

THE speaker of the House of Commons, Betty Boothroyd, has rejected a proposal from a backbench MP for a full-scale investigation into what he alleges is widespread contempt of parliament arising from the Scott report.

SPEAKER BOOTHROYD

The MP was a member of the Commons select committee on trade and industry which investigated the supergun affair in 1991 and 1992. In a long submission to the speaker in March, he alleged that several very important people named in the Scott report had deceived or obstructed the committee.

Among those mentioned by the MP were Sir Brian Unwin, former chairman of HM Customs and now head of the European Investment Bank; Alexander Russell, deputy chairman of HM customs; former trade minister Sir Tim Sainsbury; and several senior officials from the MoD and DTI.

The only businessman on the list was Mr David James CBE, who was chairman of Eagle Trust, owners of Walter Somers of Halesowen when the firm manufactured the supergun barrels for export to Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

The MP complained to the speaker that when Mr James gave evidence to the select committee in December 1991 he failed to disclose his extensive conversations about the supergun with MI6 officers. The committee got the impression that Mr James did not know that this huge gun was being manufactured in his own factory — and only found out for certain when he read about it in the newspapers.

Yet at the Scott inquiry Mr James gave a detailed account of conversations with MI6 officer "Mr Q", which plainly proved that he knew about the gun weeks before it was publicised. If MPs on the select committee had known about these conversations, they could more accurately have exposed the extraordinary role of the intelligence services who knew about the manufacture of supergun in British factories for two years before anyone did anything to stop it.

The select committee MPs were cleared to receive information about the security services. But Mr James told Scott he "was not prepared to answer questions about the intelligence service discussions with that committee". He was then asked:

Q: Were you slightly surprised to be asked these questions?

A: Extremely.

Q: Who told you that you were not going to be asked these questions?

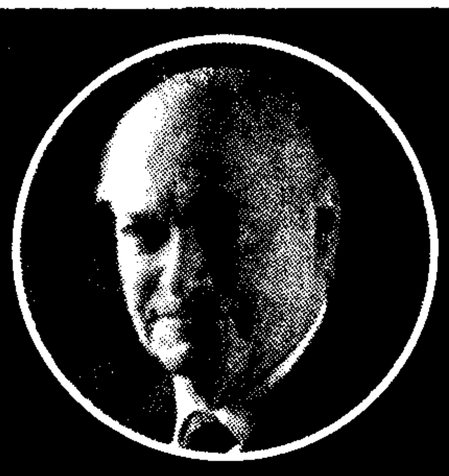
A: I was told that it was not within the orbit of the committee that they would ask them, and that is a view which had come down to me from several directions and that it was the tradition of those players that they did not intrude in areas of intelligence work. At the time it was very much my hope and expectation that nothing of this would ever become known or need to be known." (*Scott hearings, 30 June 1993*).

DAVID JAMES CBE

Consequently, when asked by the MPs if he had spoken to the intelligence services, he replied: "No. I have not had any discussions." Only after a series of testy questions from the MPs did Mr James hesitantly, and without a word of explanation, change his answer from "no" to "yes".

Asked by the *Eye* why he had not told MPs what they wanted to know, Mr James repeated what he told Scott - "the ongoing nature of any further investigations, the profession of the source itself and my own concern as to personal safety". Are these good enough reasons for withholding information from parliament? At least one MP believes that question should go to the Commons committee of privileges. But the speaker refuses to send it there. Her decision will be greeted with relief in Whitehall — and even in the speaker's office where the secretary, Nicolas Bevan, who gave evidence to the select committee as a former senior official at the ministry of defence, is one of the witnesses complained about.

Hambro sandwich



CAN you detect any common features in the following facts?

1. Lord Hambro is chairman of the Guardian Royal Exchange insurance company, which, without seeking shareholder approval, gave £50,000 last year to the Tory party.
2. Lord Hambro is the chairman of Hambros Bank, which without seeking shareholder approval gave £104,000 last year to the Tory party.
3. Lord Hambro is a director of P&O, which without seeking shareholder approval gave £100,000 last year to the Tory party.
4. Lord Hambro is a director of Taylor Woodrow, which without seeking shareholder approval gave £25,000 last year to the Tory party.
5. Lord Hambro is chairman of the Conservative party's board of treasurers.

Housing associations

■ HOUSING associations are becoming big business and are attracting big City accountants.

KPMG, one of the biggest firms, are auditors to the large East Thames Housing Association. Like so many auditors nowadays, KPMG also advised the East Thames Housing Association on computer systems and on the general organisation of the finance department.

When the finance director resigned recently, the housing association advertised for a replacement. After interviews by a panel of five board members, the job went to Mr Mark Gayfer — of KPMG.

The *Eye* asked the Housing Corporation, a quango which finances and regulates housing associations, if it approved of the appointment of a finance director from the firm which audited the accounts. "There is no conflict of interest issue" was the reply. Why? Easy. Because Mr Gayfer worked in the corporate recovery section of KPMG in the Puddledock office, while the audit department had offices in Kent. "KPMG," the Housing Corporation kindly reminded the *Eye*, "are a large organisation".

On the subject of possible conflict of interest, the *Eye* also asked the corporation about the South London Family Association, where contracts for self-build projects have gone to an architect's practice called Archetype. Much of the work was done by Mr John Broom, of Archetype, who lives with Rona Nicholson, a former committee member and now chairwoman of the association.

The Housing Corporation explained that "there is no legal conflict of interest" because the contracts went not to Archetype itself but to Archetype Special Projects, "an associated consultancy" of which Mr Broom was not a director. The corporation stressed nevertheless that Rona Nicholson should declare an interest and leave the room every time ASP comes up on the agenda.

Clwyd's Brum deal

■ **SEVERAL readers in the Birmingham area were fascinated by the revelation in the last *Eye* that the government had appointed Adrianne Jones, the city's former director of social services, to investigate and make recommendations on the serial abuse of children and young people in care in Clwyd, North Wales. They hope her report will see more light than a 1991 report on prostitution among girls in care in Birmingham.**

That report was commissioned by the Birmingham social services department and researched and written by one Jill Jesson of Aston University. It identified 20 girls in Birmingham care homes who had gone into prostitution — more than 10 per cent of the total — and called for urgent action to save many of the other girls who were at "significant risk" of going the same way.

The report was submitted early in 1992. Several copies were printed, as though the department intended to publish it; but at a meeting of social service department heads on 28 April 1992, chaired by Adrianne Jones, it was moved and carried "that the report will not be circulated" and that "the report must not be used or cited without departmental permission".

All copies of the report except one were gathered in and carted off to the incinerator. Another shorter report based on Jill Jesson's research was submitted to the council the following October.

Three years later Channel Four's *Despatches* broadcast a programme about prostitution in child care homes. Several Birmingham women were interviewed. Many of them who had been in council care at about the time the Jesson report was submitted said they were now working as prostitutes. As a result of the publicity, the report was finally published. Birmingham city council says the original report was never intended for publication and will not comment on the role of its former director.

SAFE BEECHEY

SNUBBED BY LYELL: Anne Williams

■ **NO ONE is prouder of the men and women in charge of the British legal system than former Det Supt Stan Beechey, once a big chief at the disgraced West Midlands serious crimes squad. Two recent decisions in high places have delighted him.**

Thanks to attorney-general Sir Nicholas Lie-all (*Check spelling. Ed*) (*I have. Sub-ed*), Mr Beechey will not now have to give evidence at another harrowing inquest on the Hillsborough football ground tragedy of 1989. He was in charge of the West Midlands police investigation into the disaster.

Anne Williams of Liverpool had asked Sir Nicholas for a new inquest into the death at the ground of her son Kevin. Over the years she has amassed much new evidence which was not available at the original inquest. This includes two statements from police officers strongly suggesting that her son was alive three quarters of an hour after he was meant to have died.

Both officers allege that pressure was brought on them by investigating West Midlands officers to change their original statements. One of them is backed up by evidence from an ambulance driver on the pitch, Tony Edwards, which was not heard at the original inquest. It is hard to imagine a clearer case of the "discovery of new facts" which by law demand a new inquest. Yet in his first controversial decision since his triumph at the Scott inquiry, Lie-all refused Mrs Williams a new inquest citing "the interests of justice".

Mr Beechey has not felt so relieved for a year now. This time last year, his hero and heroine were Jeremy Roberts QC, for the crown prosecution service, and his boss, the director of public prosecutions, Barbara Mills. As *Eye* readers may recall, George Tomkins, also of Liverpool, had taken out a private prosecution against Mr Beechey and two colleagues who, Mr Tomkins alleged, had fitted him up over a Warwickshire robbery and forced him to spend 15 painful months in prison on remand (he suffers from the vicious skin disease psoriasis) for something he did not do and for which, as soon as he got to trial, he was quickly acquitted.

No sooner was Mr Beechey committed for trial by Birmingham magistrates for perverting the course of justice than Mrs Mills and Mr Roberts came galloping over the hill to take over the prosecution — and promptly drop it. Mr Tomkins has now settled with the West Midlands police, who have paid him £40,000 not to take the case to court.

To Hull and back

■ **NO PUBLIC expense is being spared to welcome the polymer moulding division of Fenner plc to Maerdy in South Wales.**

The Welsh Development Agency (WDA) is splashing out £7 million on a brand new factory. Mid Glamorgan county council will build a completely new access road to the factory; and Mid Glamorgan TEC will provide "extensive training support".

The WDA boasts that the scheme will create 540 new jobs, though their enthusiasm is not shared in Hull where, as part of the move to Wales, Fenner will be closing half a factory with the loss of 400 jobs.

Fenner's chairman, Colin Cooke, knows all about the ins and outs of public money subsidies for private companies in Wales. He was a member of the board of the WDA from 1987 to 1989.

BEAVER & BEAVERKIN

■ **A MYSTERY document, the Beaver Memorandum, was produced with a flourish by Jonathan Aitken MP in his evidence to the trade and industry select committee about his former arms company BMARC and its illegal export of naval guns to Iran.**

Its author was Paul Beaver, a defence expert for Jane's Information Group. Aitken had asked him to estimate whether the guns exported to Singapore by his company BMARC in 1987-1990 could possibly have been intended for the Singapore navy. If so, Aitken claims, he cannot be blamed if the guns went on to Iran.

"Mr Beaver's memorandum," Aitken told the MPs "is very significant because what it says is: "Yes, Singapore's navy and Singapore's warship builders could easily have absorbed 140 naval guns or more."

The *Eye* has a copy of the Beaver memorandum. It says nothing of the kind. It makes no reference to 140 guns or indeed any other number of guns. It states that by 1992 there were 34 warships in the Singapore navy which could have taken 20mm guns of the type exported by BMARC. Aitken claimed to the MPs that Beaver's memo said "all" of these ships were fitted for 20mm guns. But the memo doesn't say "all". It says "several".

So how many 20mm guns actually ended up on Singapore ships? *Jane's Fighting Ships* for 1987-1988, the years that BMARC started exporting their guns, has only 18 20mm guns fitted to Singapore ships — a figure which by 1995 had grown to 21. At that rate (three guns every eight years) BMARC's 140 guns would have been fitted to Singapore ships in about 300 years.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183

In the City

IF THERE were a prize for bad judgement, Elizabeth Forsyth, former righthand-maiden of fugitive Polly Peck chairman Asil Nadir, would be a leading contender.

Not only was she convicted, after returning from his and her Northern Cyprus extradition-free haven, of helping Nadir to steal £400,000 of Polly Peck money; but her book blaming the Serious Farce Office for the £1 billion black hole in the Polly Peck books was published on the day she was given a five-year jail term. She and many others had initially forecast a suspended sentence as the maximum downside of risking a return for trial as a stalking horse for Nadir.

Who killed Polly Peck? may be little more than a recycling of the anti-SFO campaign/conspiracy theory mounted by Nadir and his mouthpieces since the crash in 1990, but it will still be unwelcome to the sleaze-prone Conservative party in the run-up to the election. For in it, one of Nadir's closest associates confirms just how hotly the Tories courted a major league conman.

A lifelong Tory and former Ilford councillor's wife, Elizabeth Forsyth gives an illuminating Her Master's Voice insight into how Tory political fund raising works. "Like many other successful entrepreneurs and tycoons, Asil Nadir had been assiduously courted by the Conservative Party. He had been invited to lunches arranged by the Conservative Industrial Fund to meet other businessmen, and there was usually at least one minister there. After the lunch, someone used to go round to PPI headquarters to collect a cheque, which seemed to be standard Tory fundraising procedure." Doubtless exactly the same procedure is going on today as the election grows ever nearer.

Nor is that the only barb that Forsyth — in charge of Nadir's Operation Protocol to obtain "dirt" on Tory MPs — delivers to the ingrates who took at least £400,000 from her beloved, persecuted boss and then abandoned him in his hour of need.

Junior health minister and one-time party deputy chairman Gerald Malone is fondly remembered. When his name surfaced in 1993 Malone had difficulty remembering ever meeting the fugitive. However, Forsyth has no such amnesia. "Abide Gonultas (Nadir's then girlfriend) still remembers Mr Malone's fondness for champagne and caviar, which she recalls him enjoying at the Eaton Square flat," writes Forsyth.

Such recollections will reawaken fears in guilty Tories that, with nothing now to lose, Forsyth and Nadir may return to the attack in the pre-election period aiming to cause maximum embarrassment by repeating or making new allegations about which ministers and MPs led the charge to Polly Peck's chequebook. After all, none of the £400,000 has ever been returned!

Meanwhile the heavy "whack" administered by Mr Justice Tucker — the target of Nadir's bid to derail his own trial with a phoney bribe plot that the SFO took all too seriously — sent a message, as it was no doubt aimed to, which resounded all the way across the Med. After Forsyth's conviction last month, Nadir expressed "great shock" to his circle of associates and fellow fugitives. So Forsyth's sentence (even if, as is possible, it is reduced on appeal) will firmly bang on the head any further talk of a return to Britain to challenge the SFO.

A man guilty of any crime other than those requiring courage, it is now considered most unlikely that Nadir will take the risk of standing before Tucker. And that is what he would have to do if he were to start any legal challenge to his trial. Such challenges cannot be mounted in absentia by fugitives. And even if the law lords rule in favour of his surety, Ramadan Guney, and affirm that Nadir is not technically a fugitive because his bail was not taken, he would be immediately arrested on return to Britain. And Nadir could not guarantee bail while he claimed he could not have a fair trial.

There is also the continuing shortage-of-readies situation which has so far prevented Nadir delivering on his longstanding promise to buy back not just the unfinished Crystal Cove hotel in Northern Cyprus for $3 million (including $1 million still owed from February for the local assets acquired last year), but the Polly Peck interests in Turkey for another $17 million.

● Who is the unnamed "researcher and writer" so coyly thanked by Forsyth for making her book possible and why is such secrecy necessary? Surely not to prevent unkind comments about Forsyth's helper Margaret Drummond being also the wife of Michael Walters of the *Daily Mail*, who so assiduously boosted Polly Peck and so enjoyed Nadir's generous hospitality?

"One of these will stick."

IT SEEMS the SFO is keen to increase its chances of obtaining a better result with Maxwell Two. Not only has Alan "Mogadon" Suckling been replaced by his junior, Richard Lissack, as prosecutor, but "Fat Controller" John Tate has become surplus to requirements as case controller. He has been replaced by the winner of several BCCI cases, Chris Dickson. Tate was on his way back to customs and excise before Maxwell One but was prevailed upon to remain until after the trial — a decision for which Kevin and Ian should be truly grateful. Now Tate is said to be on his way to a more suitable posting with the parliamentary ombudsman. MPs will have little to fear.

Also moving on after a noticeable court room defeat (George Walker) is Tricia Howse. She is off to boost the Bank of England's regulators. Two other imminent departures are fellow assistant director Michael Drury (to GCHQ) and deputy director John Knox, who is not being replaced. But all is not lost. Fred Coford, the "community service" victor over Roger Levitt, will return to Elm Street after secondment duty at Lloyd's!

"THOROUGHLY and markedly dishonest" Roger Levitt is taking a new route on his business comeback. He has been touting the "Optique" filter for computer screens to such varied potential customers as Rupert Murdoch's News International, Alan Sugar's Amstrad and the crown prince of a Gulf state. The Diamond range of golf clubs is also on offer from the convicted conman, who now describes himself as a senior consultant (fee £1,000 a month) to those marketing both products.

REPOSSESSION orders are rising again as banks and building societies move to take advantage of rising house prices to recover long overdue debts. Indeed, more than 23,000 homes were repossessed in the first quarter of this year. But not all borrowers are treated so brutally — especially if you are a sensitive case with potentially embarrassing consequences for the lender.

How otherwise to explain the remarkable episode of National Westminster and its £1 million loan to purchase Wellbury House near Hitchin, Herts. NatWest made the loan in 1990 to a proposed but never formed Orthodox Jewish charity which intended to use the 19th century building as a *yeshiva* (religious school) for up to 100 boys. The loan was made to the proposed Toiras Chesed Talmudical College Trust and its trustees led by Rabbi Sandor Stern. He was already associated with a related registered charity, the Torath Chesed Yeshiva Trust, into whose accounts the loan and Wellbury House subsequently materialised.

The NatWest loan was soon in default with little or no interest paid and no repayment made over the following six years. The bank moved to obtain possession after an order for sale of Wellbury House was obtained by another Stern creditor in January 1994. The house was by now rundown and the subject of complaints by neighbours, plus a variety of enforcement actions by local authorities.

However, no repossession has ever been effected and the *yeshiva* and Stern have remained in residence at NatWest's expense. Instead, after finally putting the property up for sale in March, it would appear NatWest is now preparing to sell the property back to interests linked to Rabbi Stern for around £450,000, thereby writing off more than half the loan and up to six years' unpaid interest.

Why NatWest should be so remarkably generous with shareholders' money — especially when it has planning permission to develop the site — and treat Wellbury House so differently from other borrowers is perhaps a mystery chairman Lord Alexander might care to explain. It presumably has nothing to do with a great City institution bowing to pressure or seeking to avoid (unjustified) allegations of anti-Semitism by opting for a quiet life and a cosy deal?

'Slicker'

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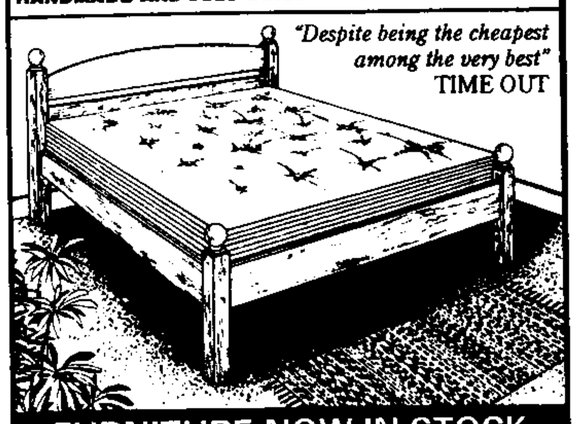

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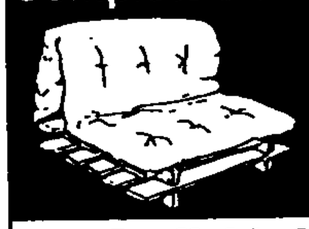

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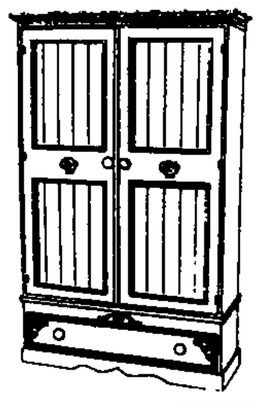

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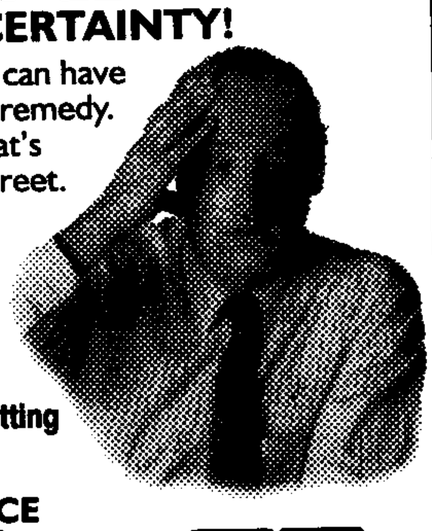

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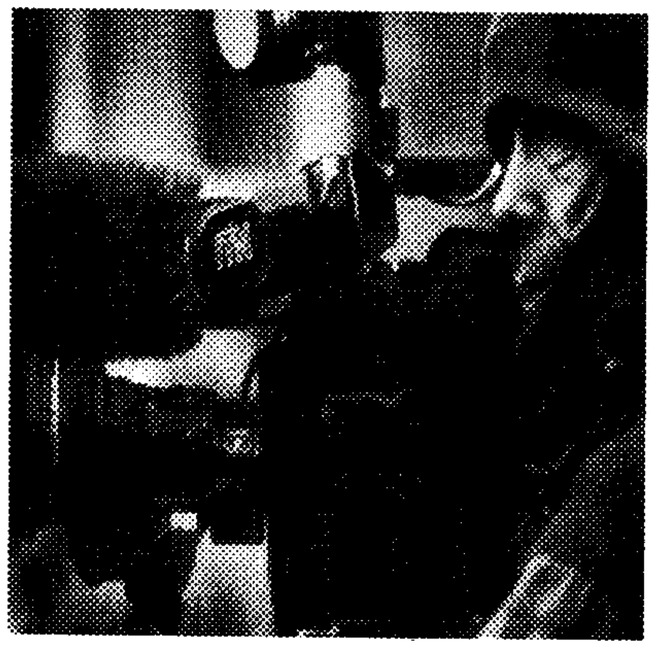

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Published by Pressdram Ltd, 6 Carlisle St, London W1. 0171-437 4017. Printed by East End Offset Ltd, Empson St, London E3 3LT. Distributed by P.E. Distribution, Mortimer Hse, 230/236 Lavender Hill, London SW11. 0171-223 9971